ABSTRACT

Terri Rogers Cobb. SYSTEMIC CHANGE: FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRAL OFFICE SUPERVISOR THAT SUPPORT INCREASED ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS (Under the direction of Dr. Lynn Bradshaw). Department of Educational Leadership, June, 2010.

A detailed review of the history of education documented the role of the central office supervisor as being overlooked as a contributing factor to increased student achievement. The emerging research warns that improvements in student achievement will fail to reach the majority of the schools and can rarely be sustained without substantial involvement from the central office. Utilizing a synthesis of the current research, a theoretical framework and related survey instrument addressing current leadership roles and responsibilities of the central office administrator in the improvement of student achievement were developed. Principals in a large, urban district completed the 55-item survey instrument. To further explore perceptions, a focus group was conducted.

In order to determine internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's Alpha or Reliability Coefficient was computed for each of the domains on the survey. The results of Cronbach's Alpha Test for Reliability ranged from .706 to .855, which fell within the adequate to good range. The total numbers, percentages, and frequency distributions for responses on the survey instrument were calculated for each of the statements, as well as the thematic domains. In addition, Fisher's exact tests were conducted to determine if there were relationships in responses for principals in schools that made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and principals in schools that did not make AYP. Fisher's exact tests examined the null hypotheses at the .05 significance level, or $p < .05$.

The findings of the study supported essential functions for the central office in improving student achievement. Furthermore, this study revealed that a statistical relationship did not exist between the perceptions of principals in schools that met AYP and principals of schools that did not meet AYP. The findings, implications, and recommendations for further study are discussed.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE: FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRAL OFFICE SUPERVISOR

THAT SUPPORT INCREASED ACHIEVEMENT

FOR ALL STUDENTS

A Dissertation

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by

Terri Rogers Cobb

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SYSTEMIC CHANGE: FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRAL OFFICE SUPERVISOR

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Terri Rogers Cobb

APPROVED BY:

CHAIR OF DISSERTATION:_____
<div align="right">Lynn Bradshaw</div>

COMMITTEE MEMBER:_____
<div align="right">Harold Holloman, Jr.</div>

COMMITTEE MEMBER:_____
<div align="right">Lane Mills</div>

COMMITTEE MEMBER:_____
<div align="right">Marjorie Ringler</div>

COMMITTEE MEMBER:_____
<div align="right">Joe Peel</div>

INTERIM CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

_____
<div align="right">William Rouse, Jr.</div>

ACTING DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL:

_____
<div align="right">Paul Gemperline</div>

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband and best friend, Warren. No matter which direction our personal and professional lives have taken us, you have always encouraged me to hold tight to my beliefs, passions, and dreams. I could feel your presence through the difficult times, your satisfaction as hurdles were passed, and your pride in times of celebration. For this, I will be eternally grateful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

English poet John Donne wrote, "No man is an island." I sincerely believe his words to be true and know that completion of this doctoral program was possible only through the support of many wonderful people. I begin by thanking the East Carolina University faculty within the Department of Educational Leadership. I learned much from every phase of the process. The experience has been very rewarding, professionally and personally. Your expertise, knowledge, and commitment to a quality program are to be admired. I extend a special thanks to my dissertation committee; Dr. Lynn Bradshaw, Dr. Harold Holloman, Dr. Lane Mills, Dr. Joe Peel, and Dr. Marjorie Ringler. Your willingness to give freely of your time and advice was invaluable as I moved through this process. To my Chair, Dr. Lynn Bradshaw, there are no words that can adequately express my gratitude. You always asked the right questions to move me to the next level. Your patience, knowledge, wisdom, and sincere concern made the difference. I left every conversation with confidence and a desire to do my best.

During the last several years, I have appreciated the collegiality from my cohort members. You added to my experiences through your experiences. Even though we will no longer meet through the program, I know we will continue these relationships throughout our lives. I would particularly like to thank Pam Breedlove and Dave Schwenker. I have appreciated our professional relationships and, more importantly, your friendships.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Del Burns and Ann Bagley, two former colleagues. Dr. Burns strongly encouraged me to pursue this degree and removed barriers to make it possible. Ann Bagley supported me with technical advice. I

appreciate both of you for your encouragement throughout the process and extend to you my sincere gratitude.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, credited with initiating

several decades of pointed discussions about America's public schools, stunned

educators and the public, and as a result, elevated interest in identifying strategies that

increased student achievement (Hunt, 2008). Two decades later, the enactment of the

reauthorization of the *Elementary Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) as the *No Child Left*

Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Public Law 107-110 (2002), not only reminded educators of

their obligation to provide every child with an appropriate education but made it a legal

requirement as well (Berry, Darling-Hammond, Hirsch, Robinson, & Wise, 2006;

Danielson, 2006; Danielson, Doolittle & Bradley, 2007; Hunt, 2008; No Child Left Behind

Act of 2001). Even with this mandate, national trend lines starting in 2000 demonstrated

clear evidence that growth in reading and math slowed after the enactment of *NCLB*

(Bracey, 2008; Carbo, 2007; Duffett, Farkas, & Loveless, 2008). Reading achievement

for students on the *National Assessment of Educational Progress* (NAEP) remained the

same and, in some cases, declined between 2001 and 2006 (National Center for

Education Statistics, 2006). While math showed a slight increase from 2001 until 2006,

the recent release of the 2009 *NAEP* results was framed by stagnated math scores for

fourth grade students (Cavanagh, 2009b). In addition, the achievement gap between

white and non-white students has remained unchanged, which has further shattered

hopes that schools were moving in the right direction (Ravitch, 2009).

The results have left school-based educators asking if the demands of

accountability are realistic (Fullan; 1997; Fullan, 2010(c); Goertz & Duffy, 2003; Guskey,

2007; Guzman, 2010), and researchers posing difficult questions as to whether improvements in American public schools are even possible under the new mandates (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, and Karhanek, 2010; Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Finn, 1991; Fullan, 1997; Guzman, 2010; Sarason, 1990; Schlechty, 2001). These questions come as no surprise since the best efforts to meet the mandates have only yielded modest results, and neither top-down, side-ways, or bottom-up efforts have achieved the desired improvements (Beck & Murphy, 1989; Dufour & Eaker; Pajak, Adamson, & Rhoades, 1998; Fullan, 2010(c); Schlechty).

Even though much has been written in the last several decades about the need for school-based change (Arterbury, 1991; Bjork & Blasé, 2009; Blasé & Blasé, 1994, 1997; Bradley, 1995; Brown, 1990; Carr, 1988; Chapman, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1997; David, 1996; Ellis & Fouts, 1994; Finn, 1991; Finn & Walberg, 1994; Hill & Bonan, 1991; Imber & Duke, 1984; Noel, Slate, Brown, & Tejeda-Delgado, 2008; Rose, 2007; Weber, 1971; Weick, 1982), it has become painfully apparent that the school does not exist in seclusion and cannot be expected to lead the charge alone (Daresh, 2004; Hargreaves, 1997; Hatch, 2009; Honig & Copland, 2008; Le Floch, Carlson, Taylor, & Thomsen, 2006; Markward, 2008; Protheroe, 2008; Rallis & Highsmith, 1986; Togneri & Anderson, 2003a). The compelling evidence that schools cannot meet these mandates in isolation, combined with the consequences of failing to meet the mandates, are too great for districts to ignore. Leaders must pay attention to the growing research, which warns educators that if schools are required to tackle the issues without substantial involvement from the central office, improvements will fail to reach the majority of the

schools (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008; Goodlad & Oakes, 1988; Hatch; Honig & Copland, 2008; Leverett, 2004; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Even though educators are well aware that the accountability requirements of *NCLB* placed the responsibility on the schools (Berry et al., 2006; Goertz & Duffy, 2003; Guskey, 2007), one of the most dramatic changes may be the change in the relationship between the central office and the school in order to increase achievement for all students (Guskey; Larson, 2007; Odland, 2007/2008; Protheroe, 2008). In 2001, Tirozzi reported that there were very few models of success on the district level; however, research in the last few years shows that a small number of districts are beginning to accept the challenge, are overcoming the fear of being perceived as top-down leaders, and are obtaining results by recreating the relationship between the district and the schools (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Dufour, 2007; Guskey; Honig & Copland, 2008; Johnston, 2001; Protheroe; Rorrer, Skria, & Scheurich, 2008). As districts are choosing to undertake reform efforts through central office led efforts, researchers caution that it will not be an easy task (Hatch, 2009; Honig & Copland; Leverett, 2004). Systemic change will mean challenging the contrasting research of the previous two decades, which clearly promotes the school as the source of change.

In addition, districts will be required to overcome the negative image of the central office supervisor created throughout history, partially as a result of the absence of research related to the supervisor's function within the district. As early as 1966, Ben Harris identified research related to the central office supervisor's behavior as a critical need. Over forty years later, this area of research is still identified as a critical need,

which has resulted in supervision from the central office becoming basically overlooked as a factor in contributing to the improvement of student achievement (Chrispeels et al., 2008; Cunningham, 1963; Grove, 2002; Pajak, 1989; Rorrer et al., 2008; Tyack, 2002; Wimpelberg, 1987). Finn (1991) captured the widely held belief of the central office in the following statement: "The school is the vital delivery system, the state is the policy setter (and chief paymaster), and nothing in between is very important" (Finn, p. 246). William Bennett, former U. S. Secretary of Education, and other colleagues, reinforced this belief when they used "the blob" to describe the educational hierarchy because of the difficulty in implementing organizational change that impacts student learning (Bennett, Finn & Cribb, 1999, pp. 628-634). This notion reinforced the role of the central office supervisor that emerged throughout history as one that is strongly identified with a bureaucratic, ineffective, top-down approach. With extremely limited research to dispute that accusation, the role of the central office supervisor may be the least understood and most ill-defined position in the educational hierarchy (Glanz, 1977; Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Harris, 1998; Honig & Copland, 2008; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; Pajak, 1989).

Pajak (1989) described the central office supervisor as the *invisible role* (pp. 179-180). Central office supervisors have been expected to remain behind the scenes, silently supporting the instructional efforts of teachers and principals. While supervisors have expressed that the invisible role was necessary for moving the organization forward, the consequence has been that supervisors have been dismissed by school-based educators and the public as one of the critical elements for increased student

achievement (Glanz, 1977; Honig & Copland, 2008; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; Pajak, 1989).

District leaders can easily discover that the negative picture of the central office painted throughout history still exists in the minds of educators and the public. One example can be seen when Leverett (2004) implied that principals and teachers on the frontline managed to survive the changes by paying very little attention to the central office. In addition, recent evidence of the public's failure to recognize the important role of the central office in the success of the school is seen in public response to budget cuts imposed by the current economic situation. While stakeholders support funding for education, they readily offer deep cuts in central office positions in lieu of school-based positions, programs, and supplies (Ramquist, 2009; Reader reactions to state budget cuts, 2009; UFT press release-reaction to budget cuts, 2009). Currently, research related to the role of the central office is still in its infancy and very little is known about the role of the central office in district improvement (Fullan, 1991; Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Honig & Copland, 2008; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; Pajak et al., 1998). If the emerging research is correct and school improvement cannot occur or be sustained without district involvement (Honig & Copland), there is a sense of urgency in identifying district functions that contribute to improvements in academic achievement for all students.

<div align="center">Purpose of the Study</div>

This study adds to the limited research by exploring the functions of the central office in improving achievement for all students. Utilizing a synthesis of current research, seven thematic domains were identified as essential functions of the central

office in improving achievement for all students (see Figure 1: Theoretical framework for the functions of the central office in improving student achievement). The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals agreed or disagreed with the domains identified within the research. This study also determined if there are relationships in perceptions of principals in schools that met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) and schools that did not meet AYP under *NCLB.* This information is critical in identifying how the central office can best serve the schools in increasing achievement for all students.

Overview of Methodology

Information gathered utilizing current research, ideology, and practice was synthesized to identify the role of central office in increasing student achievement. From this synthesis, seven thematic domains were identified. These domains were used to form a theoretical framework for the functions of the central office in effective district reform. This framework can be found in chapter 2, Review of the Literature.

From this framework, a survey was developed (see Appendix C: Survey for Principals). Utilizing the survey, principals were asked their perceptions of these district functions in improving student achievement. The difference between the perceptions of principals representing schools that met AYP and principals representing schools that did not meet AYP was explored for the following thematic domains found within the theoretical framework: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies.

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SYSTEMIC FOCUS	
COMMITMENT TO INSTRUCTION	
USE OF DATA TO DRIVE DECISIONS	
INVESTMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	
OPTIMAL USE OF HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES	
IDENTIFICATION OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES	
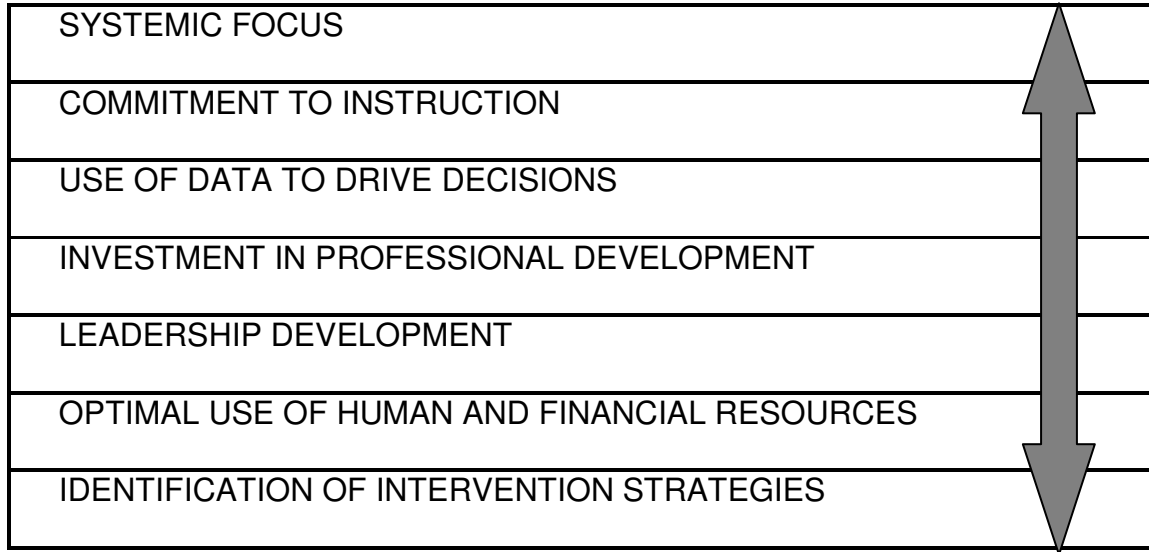
Figure 1. Theoretical framework for the functions of the central office in improving student achievement.

The total number of responses, related percentages, and frequency distributions for responses to statements on the survey were calculated to determine which district functions principals perceive as essential in increasing student achievement. A series of seven Fisher's Exact Tests were performed to determine if there is a relationship between principals' responses to the district's role in increasing student achievement and whether the school met AYP or did not meet AYP (see Table 1: Fisher's Exact Tests Examining Principals Perceptions of the District's Role in Improving Student Achievement). After surveys were returned, participants were invited to participate in a focus group to further explore the level of consensus among responses on the survey (Patton, 2002).

Setting

The study was conducted in a large urban district located in the Southeast. At the end of the twentieth day at the opening of the 2009-2010 school year, the district served 139,599 students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, making the district the 18th largest school district in the nation. Eleven municipalities, as well as the surrounding county, are within the attendance area. During the 2009-10 school year, the district consisted of 159 schools. Included in the total number of schools are two alternative middle schools, two non-traditional high schools, and two 9th grade centers (Wake County Public Schools District Overview 2008-09, n.d.).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results. The most recent test results for the district, the 2008-09 state mandated tests, were used to determine schools that met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Even though the district currently has 159 schools, three of the schools opened during the 2009-2010 school year and were not included in

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Table 1

Fisher's Exact Tests Examining Principals' Perceptions of the District's Role in Improving Student Achievement

	Systemic Focus	Commitment to Instruction	Use of Data to Drive Decisions	Investment in Professional Development	Leadership Development	Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources	Identification of Intervention Strategies
	Agree Disagree	Agree Disagree	Agree Disagree	Agree Disagree	Agree Disagree	Agree Disagree	Agree Disagree
Principals' Perceptions -Met AYP -Did not meet AYP	Fisher's Exact Test 1.1	Fisher's Exact Test 1.2	Fisher's Exact Test 1.3	Fisher's Exact Test 1.4	Fisher's Exact Test 1.5	Fisher's Exact Test 1.6	Fisher's Exact Test 1.7

the 2008-09 test results. Of the 156 schools, 98 schools or 62.8% made Adequate

Yearly Progress (AYP).

Organization of schools. The schools are divided into seven areas supervised by

area superintendents. Area superintendents report to a chief area superintendent, who

reports directly to the superintendent.

Organization of central office. The central office is divided into six major areas,

reporting to six chief officers: (1) Chief of Staff, (2) Chief Business Officer, (3) Chief

Communications Officer, (4) Chief Facilities and Operations Officer, (5) Chief Academic

Officer, and (6) Chief Area Superintendent (see Figure 4: Central Office Organizational

Chart).

Research Questions

 The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Which district functions do principals believe are essential in improving

    achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use

    of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership

    development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification

    of intervention strategies?

2. Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals of

    schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP?

Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses addressed principals' perceptions regarding the district's

role in increasing achievement for all students in each of the thematic domains within

the theoretical framework:

$H_0$1: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$2: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a commitment to instruction among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$3: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the use of data to drive decisions among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$4: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the investment in professional development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$5: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in promoting leadership development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$6: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the optimal use of human and financial resources among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$7: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the identification of intervention strategies among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). "Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures the yearly progress of each of 10 NCLB-defined student groups toward the NCLB goals of all students being at or above grade level (proficient) in reading and math by the end of the 2013-2014 school year" (North Carolina No Child Left Behind, 2008, p. 1). Adequate Yearly Progress is used to determine the annual progress toward achieving grade level performance goals for each student and each school. Student groups include: (1) the School as a Whole; (2) White; (3) Black; (4) Hispanic; (5) Native American; (6) Asian; (7) Multiracial; (8) Economically Disadvantaged Students; (9) Limited English Proficient Students; and (10) Students with Disabilities (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). If one student group does not meet the proficiency goal in mathematics or reading/language arts, then the school does not make AYP for that year, with some exceptions. Table 2 lists the percentage of students at a proficient level required for schools to meet the 2008-09 AYP requirements (North Carolina No Child Left Behind, 2008). In addition, the school as a whole must show progress on other indicators such as attendance rate and graduation cohort rate (North Carolina No Child Left Behind, 2008).

Central office supervisor. Supervisors currently hold jobs with a varied assortment of job titles (Wiles & Bondi, 1986), making it unlikely that functions of the supervisor in district improvement would be adequately captured without an expansion of search terms beyond *central office supervisor*. As a result, district and central office are used synonymously and apply to those positions that serve as a critical link between

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Table 2

North Carolina 2008-2009 Proficiency Target Goals

	Grades 3-8 (%)		Grade 10 (%)	
Year	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
2008-09	43.2	77.2	38.5	68.4

the district and the school in continuous improvement efforts (Land, 2002; McLaughlin, 1990).

End-of-Course tests (EOC). End-of-Course Tests (EOC) are aligned to the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* and are used to calculate levels of proficiency for the individual student and groups of students in a particular school or school systems at the secondary level. These tests are also used to calculate state accountability in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (see a definition of Adequate Yearly Progress above) (Understanding the North Carolina End-of-Course Tests, 2007). End-of-Course tests given in the 2008-09 school year were Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Civics and Economics, English I, Geometry, Physical Science, Physics, and U.S. History (North Carolina School Report Cards, 2009). The End-of-Course tests are taken by students within the final five days of courses on a block schedule and within the final ten days of courses on a traditional schedule (Understanding the North Carolina End-of-Course Tests).

End-of-Grade tests (EOG). End-of-Grade (EOG) Tests are curriculum-based multiple-choice achievement tests at grades 3–8 (North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests, 2007). During the 2008-09 school year, students were tested in the areas of reading and mathematics (North Carolina School Report Cards, 2009). These tests are aligned to the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* and are used to calculate student growth and levels of proficiency for the individual student and groups of students in a particular school or school system. These tests are also used to calculate state accountability in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (see a definition of Adequate

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Yearly Progress above). The End-of-Grade tests are given during the last three weeks of a school year (North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* emphasizes:

> standards for teachers and new consequences for Title I schools that do not meet student achievement standards for two or more consecutive years. The law's major goal is for every school to be proficient in reading/language arts and mathematics by 2013-14 as measured by state tests (North Carolina No Child Left Behind, n. d.).

Student achievement. Throughout this study, student achievement was referenced. For the purpose of this study, student achievement is defined by results on End-of-Grade (EOG) tests for elementary and middle schools and results on End-of-Course (EOC) tests for high schools, which are the major tests used for determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Thematic domain. Utilizing the current research, functions of the central office essential in increasing student achievement were identified. These functions were organized by themes. Seven thematic domains were identified, which served as the theoretical framework for this study.

<p style="text-align:center">Significance of Study</p>

District reform has outpaced the research that defines the relationship between the school and the central office in increasing achievement for all students (Honig & Copland, 2008). While a review of the research in chapter 2 connects increased

achievement for all students and the functions of the central office, there is clearly the need for additional research to further define this relationship (Fullan, 1991; Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Honig & Copland; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008).

In addition, Shannon and Bylsma (2004) warn that the fiscal costs of improving student achievement need to be given careful consideration; however, the social costs of not improving a district can be even worse. With the new mandates calling for increased achievement for all students, as well as stakeholder demands for accountability, information to assist leaders in making informed decisions is critical. This study is extremely timely as districts go through the process of setting priorities in order to address the mandates within NCLB with reduced operating budgets.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that principals participating in the study would be honest and forthright in responding to statements on the survey.

2. It was assumed that principals participating in the study had some knowledge of the role of the central office in improving student achievement.

Limitations of the Study

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

This study relied heavily on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which continues to receive widespread debate, largely due to the narrow focus on test scores (Cavanagh, 2009a; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008; Lang, 2007; Guzman, 2010). All student subgroups within a school are expected to meet the target goal for percentage of students proficient. Proficiency is measured in the areas of mathematics and reading/language arts (North Carolina No Child Left Behind, n. d.).

Working Conditions

Other factors within the district and the schools that typically influence working conditions such as time, atmosphere, school leadership, district leadership, facilities, resources, and teacher involvement (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009) were not taken into account for this study.

Selection Criteria for Participation in Focus Group

Convenience sampling was the method utilized for selecting participants in the focus group.

Selection Criteria for Participation in the Survey

Participant selection criteria did not include distinguishing factors such as experience in teaching, longevity in their current position, previous administrative positions held in the North Carolina Public School System or any other state. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was taken from the 2008-09 school year, which at the time of the study was the latest available data. The participants for this study were based on 2009-2010 assignments.

Testing Data

The only student achievement data used for this study were North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) tests and End-of-Course (EOC) tests, used to measure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Other testing data such as Effectiveness Indexes, EVAAS and the State Growth Model were not used for selecting participants.

Relevance to Other Districts

The study was limited to one large, urban district. Since the narrative summative was an analysis from multiple studies, it is hoped that the findings will provide insights

for other districts. However, each school district has unique characteristics and serves as a reflection of the community it represents, which should be considered.

Research Organization

Chapter 1 is an introduction including a statement of the problem, the purpose, an overview of the methodology, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework used in the study and the history of supervision, including the models of supervision that emerged: (1) supervision as inspection, (2) supervision as social efficiency, (3) democratic supervision, (4) scientific supervision, (5) supervision as an agent of change, (6) clinical supervision, and (7) supervision as leadership. In addition, chapter 2 includes current influences and challenges as well as a narrative synthesis of the emerging research related to the supervisor's role in district improvement. The synthesis of the current research forms the theoretical framework for the study and serves as the foundation for the survey used within the study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used within this study. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the data, and chapter 5 presents summary statements and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review and synthesize the literature and research related to the support provided by central services for the schools in improving student achievement. A history of central office supervision is presented first. Current influences on education are presented next. Finally, a synthesis of research on the role of the central office services is included. The emerging themes were used to develop the theoretical framework for the study. Sources utilized in this review were identified using the search terms: *central office*, *restructuring, district reform, student achievement, school district, school improvement, supervisor, change, support, systemic, superintendents,* and *principals.* Two major data bases, *Education Research Complete* and *ERIC via EBSCO Host,* were accessed. In addition, an *ancestry approach* was used in which possible sources for inclusion were identified through reference lists (Rorrer et al., 2008). Current research was incorporated throughout the study.

Theoretical Framework

An essential component of this study was a synthesis of the research used to identify thematic domains for a theoretical framework. Essential components from multiple studies were extracted in order to identify a core of fundamental functions for the central office considered critical in improving student achievement. Completing this research required an expansion of search terms beyond *central office supervisor*. Supervisors currently hold jobs with a varied assortment of job titles (Glatthorn, 1998; Wiles & Bondi, 1986). A broad search was utilized to increase the probability that functions of the supervisor would be adequately captured. The expansion of job titles

for central office supervisors is discussed in more detail in chapter 2 under the section entitled, *Supervision as Leadership.* The research of Rorrer et al. (2008) supported this action and noted that the research to date does not separate the supervisors' roles but uses *district* as a collective term to describe support for the schools from the system level, including the superintendent.

The synthesis was limited to studies that addressed multiple criteria for district involvement in school improvement since 2001. Even though *NCLB* was enacted in 2002, the date of the reauthorization of the *Elementary Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) as *the No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) *Act* occurred in 2001, which was the date selected for this search.

As recommended in a study utilizing a narrative synthesis by Rorrer et al. (2008), mapping available evidence is consistent with this methodology and allows a process for tracking sources. Thus, this search yielded fifty-four (N=54) sources, including 7 research briefs (N=7), 20 studies that were considered empirical research (N=20), 20 studies that were expert opinions (N=20), and 7 articles that were a general review of the research (N=7) (see Appendix C: Sources of Thematic Domains for Central Office Functions). From the synthesis, functions of the central office essential for improving achievement for all students were identified. These functions were grouped into seven thematic domains, which served as the theoretical framework for this study (see Figure 1, Theoretical framework for functions of the central office in improving student achievement). These domains included; systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of

intervention strategies. While the functions are presented separately, there is considerable overlap, which is a reflection of the research (English, 2009; Fullan & Levin, 2009; Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlihy, 2002). In the section, *Emerging Research,* these seven functions are presented with additional explanations and detail.

History of Supervision

Sergiovianni (1982) stressed that to understand past failures, it is critical to review the influencing factors from a historical perspective. Supervision has been shaped by many factors unique to American education and reflective of social movements and values of a particular era. As values have shifted, so have all facets of education, including teaching and supervision (Alfonso, Firth, & Neville, 1975; Clark, 1975; Glanz, 1998; Karier, 1982). Even with these shifts, many practices have survived from one era to the next, supporting the importance of having knowledge of the history in understanding current practice and ideology (Sergiovianni, 1982).

It is no accident, for example, that schools throughout the states and territories of the United States share a remarkable resemblance in organization and structure. The requirements of accrediting agencies and state education departments for program and licensing approval, for example, provide certain uniformity in thought and practice about education in general and teaching and supervision in particular that overrides any diversity assumed by the public commitment to state and local control. This uniformity occurs in reaction to certain societal forces and expectations. Standards and practices are ideologies that reflect the pressures dominant in our society. To understand fully present practice in supervision, therefore, historical analysis is necessary (Sergiovianni, 1982, p. 1).

In this body of research, three sources were identified that provided tables in which the changing models of supervision or administration were compared over a specific timeframe. Wiles and Bondi (1986) provided a table which listed the periods in which the different models of supervision were utilized, beginning with the nineteenth century and ending in the 1980s. Alfonso et al. (1975) expanded this information in a similar table, which included the history through the 1970s. In a table presented by Alfonso et al., models from each era were identified, as well as the predominant practice and supervisory personnel responsible for the practice. Pajak (1993) provided a table depicting the concepts of educational leadership beginning in 1940 and ending in 1990. This table listed the models, the years in which the models were utilized, the mission of each model, the methods and the guiding principles.

As a result of this body of research, a comparison table was also developed, which expanded upon the work of these earlier studies, to assist in identifying changing supervisory models throughout the history of education (see Figure 2: Shifting Models of Educational Supervision). The intent of this table is to identify the supervisory models from the 1800s through 1990, the defining characteristics, the influencing events and the influencing trends. Not only does this information assist the reader in identifying the shifting models, but it also documents the internal and external events that influenced the outgrowth of each model.

Timeframe	Supervision Model	Defining Characteristics	Influencing Events	Influencing Trends and Issues
Prior to 1830	Laissez-Faire	Concerned with hiring	1642 Massachusetts Bay Law 1647 Deluder Satan Act	Settlement of Colonies
1830-1900	Inspection by Lay Committees Inspection by Administration	Focus on facilities and equipment Focus on performance of teachers Authoritative Coercion Subordination	1861-1865 Civil War 1870 *Department of Superintendence* 1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson*	Common School Movement	Industrial Expansion Urbanization Immigration Bureaucratization
1900-1930	Social Efficiency	Standardization Conformity Regimentation Effectiveness Economy Business Involvement	1892 Rice Report on Education 1914-1919 World War I 1921 *National Conference of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction* 1929 Great Depression	Scientific Management	
1930-1960	Democratic Supervision / Scientific Supervision	Democratic Cooperation Human Relations Emotional Development / Democratic Scientific Methods Science	1929 *Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction*, name changed from *National Conference of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction* 1941-1945 World War II 1943 *Department of Supervision and Curriculum* 1946 Changed Name to *Association of Supervision and Curriculum* 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education*	Progressive Movement Human Relations Movement	Civil Rights Movement
1960-1970	Change Agent	Reform Innovation Accelerated Change	1957 Sputnik 1958 *National Defense Education Act* 1963 *Vocational Education Act* 1964 *Civil Rights Act* 1965 *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* 1966 Coleman Report 1967 Teachers Unionized	Federal Involvement
1970-1980	Clinical Supervision	Collegiality Collaboration Ethical conduct		
1980-1990	Supervision as Leadership	Business Involvement Leadership Corporate	1983 *A Nation at Risk* Published	Excellence Movement Effective Schools Movement

Note. Double Line-Point of Change; Broken Line – Overlapping Periods or Concepts; No Line – No Change.

Figure 2. Shifting models of educational supervision.

Supervision as Inspection

The first reference to supervision was in the eighteenth century in Boston (Alfonso et al., 1975). Prior to the eighteenth century, legislation such as the Massachusetts Bay Law of 1642 and the Deluder Satan Act of 1647 signified the high priority placed on education (Alfonso et al.). These laws established the first steps toward compulsory attendance, holding parents accountable for the education of their children. In historical accounts, tremendous emphasis was placed on the selection of teachers with certain religious and moral qualities. Reference was made to local leaders of the town visiting the school, but no reference was made to the inspecting of teachers' instructional methods (Barr, Burton, & Brueckner, 1947).

Between 1830 and 1850, the Common School Movement led by Horace Mann in Massachusetts emerged as the first state educational system (Karier, 1982). The purpose of the Common School was to ensure the teaching of common values of society. This Movement, initiated by increased focus on nationalism, and as a result of concerns over the economy resulting from immigration and industrialization, extended state authority within the schools. Reformers encouraged a more bureaucratic educational system in order to increase efficiency, standardize the curriculum, and control teacher behavior (Karier). Increasingly, control of the school was vested in local civic and religious leaders and committees of citizens with the authority to visit and inspect schools (Alfonso et al., 1975; Barr et al., 1947; Karier; Lucio & McNeil, 1962). By the end of the Civil War, America had greatly extended state authority in education. The second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by industrial expansion, economic growth, and bureaucratization. Every aspect of society was affected including

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the schools (Alfonso et al.; Barr et al.; Karier; Lucio & McNeil). By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the schools had become more bureaucratic and the responsibility for supervision was gradually shifted to board-appointed employees (Alfonso et al.; Glanz, 1998).

It is important to note that the principal, not the superintendent, was the first board-appointed employee to oversee the school (Alfonso et al., 1975). This position became more frequently observed in the nineteenth century. A lead teacher, often referred to as a *master teacher, principal, or head teacher,* was singled out and assigned prescribed, managerial duties (Alfonso et al.; Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987). Supervision responsibilities and duties consisted primarily of maintenance of the building, school attendance records, coordinating use of equipment and supplies, and providing lay committees with reports. Supervision required for improving instruction was not a component of the early responsibilities (Alfonso et al.; Anderson & Davies, 1956; Barr et al., 1947; Campbell et al., 1987). Even though the principalship appeared before the superintendence, the position lagged behind the superintendence in assumption of supervisory responsibilities, primarily because of the teaching duties usually assigned to the principal. The principal reported directly to the board of education prior to the superintendent's position. From the onset of the superintendent's position, the principal was expected to obey the directives of the superintendent. Supervisor responsibility to make decisions related to teacher performance did not reside with the principal, but was solely the responsibility of lay committees, followed by the superintendent (Glanz, 1991).

The first steps toward including a central office in the organizational structure of a school system occurred during the nineteenth century with the practice of appointing superintendents. Some of the first superintendents were appointed in accordance with state legislation; others were selected by city/town councils (Campbell et al., 1987). By 1870, there were twenty-nine superintendents of schools serving as chief executive officers according to the *Seventh Yearbook for the National Society for the Scientific Study of Education* (Campbell et al.).

The first superintendents, initially referred to as *school commissioners*, usually began their careers as teachers and were generally not highly educated or professionally trained (Campbell et al., 1987; Tyack, 1974). The superintendent's position emerged mainly in an effort to relieve boards of education from administrative duties, and in turn, produce a more efficient and productive system (Alfonso et al., 1975; Campbell et al.; Tyack).

Boards of education met with many challenges in establishing the position. Fearing the position might be viewed as having authority previously vested in the boards of education, boards struggled in defining the role and often remained highly involved in administrative work even after the position was established. Distinctions in the governance role of the boards of education and the administrative functions of the superintendent were not clearly defined. In addition, principals and teachers did not support the establishment of the superintendent's position for fear of losing privileges they had previously enjoyed (Campbell et al., 1987). Evidence of these struggles was seen in urban districts such as Philadelphia, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Detroit. These boards of education created superintendent positions only to abolish the positions

several years later (Barr et al., 1947; Campbell et al.; Rogers, 1952). The growing size and complexity of educational programs were reasons that the superintendent's position was increasingly seen in districts at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (Barr et al.; Rogers). Issues that boards of education now had to consider included (a) university courses and certification required for school administration, (b) high schools changed from selective to universal institutions, (c) organizations such as the American Association of School Administrators emerged, (d) research emphasized the need for a diversified curriculum to meet the needs of the varying capacities of students, (e) schools had new responsibilities for health and vocational education, and (f) technology continued to expand (Rogers).

Even after the need for the role was established, determining the method to meet these new responsibilities caused increased tension between boards and educators. It was not uncommon for boards of education to appoint two superintendents to a district, one in charge of the educational programs and the other responsible for the financial affairs of the district. This practice did not last long in favor of one superintendent as the executive officer (Anderson & Davies, 1956; Tyack, 1974). The establishment of the *Department of Superintendence* as a division within the *National Educational Association (NEA)* in 1870 is evidence of the increased recognition of the position as a profession (Crabtree, 1934).

Once the position was established, the superintendent quickly assumed the responsibilities for supervision as defined by the lay committees and boards of education. Supervisory responsibilities were initially viewed as oversight involving three functions: *inspection, direction, and improvement* (Ayer & Barr, 1928, p. 347).

Inspection was clearly identified as the priority and can be seen in publications from the

era. G. T. Fletcher (1888), a member of the Massachusetts School Board, expressed

the general views of the public when he stated that supervision was increasingly critical

to the success of schools, thus making the superintendence a necessary factor in the

public schools. In describing the supervisory responsibilities, he stated, "School

inspection is now the most important element of school supervision" (Fletcher, p. 101).

An early perspective from a superintendent describing the expectations of inspections

can be seen in the writings of John Philbrick (1876):

> An inspection is a visitation for the purpose of observation, of oversight, of
>
> superintendence. Its aim is to discover to a greater or lesser extent the tone and
>
> spirit of the school, the conduct and application of the pupils, the management
>
> and methods of the teacher, and the fitness and conduction of the premises.
>
> Good inspection commends excellences, gently indicates faults, defects and
>
> errors, and suggests improvements as occasion requires. By the expectation of
>
> visits of inspection, of the right sort, teachers are stimulated to fidelity, and to
>
> efforts for advancement in efficiency (p. 3).

Gradually, the focus of inspections shifted from the facilities and equipment to the

monitoring of instructional methods and reforming incompetent teachers. This change

was prompted by the widely held belief that most teachers performed inadequately (Barr

et al., 1947). This shift was promoted by prominent educators such as William Torrey

Harris (1881), A.W. Edson (1893), Frank Fitzpatrick (1900), and James A. Greenwood

(1904). The belief that teachers needed reform can be seen in the writings of T.M.

Balliet (1893) when he stated the only way to reform a school was to "secure a

competent superintendent; second, to let him 'reform' all the teachers who are incompetent and can be 'reformed'; thirdly to bury the dead" (pp. 437-438).

Supervisors commanded excellence, but they rarely did more than suggest improvements. Methods by supervisors to improve teaching practices usually involved presenting the teacher with approved materials and strategies, and then expecting teachers to produce coordinated and consistent instruction. Follow-up inspection of the classrooms was the method used to obtain information concerning fidelity to the application of the approved materials and strategies. As a result, teachers were often still unprepared for the demands that were increasingly thrust upon them. In rare situations in which suggestions for instructional improvement were made, this process was indirect with no follow-up. Teachers deemed ineffective were handled through punitive methods. When serious deficiencies in performance occurred, no attempts were made to improve the teacher or the situation; instead the teacher was dismissed (Barr et al., 1947; Bolin & Panaritis, 1992; Glanz, 1998).

While authors varied in their description of the interactions between supervisors and teachers, some authors describe how coercion was used by the supervisor (Barr et al., 1947; Bolin & Panaritis, 1992). Tyack (1974) explained how this early educational system also required subordination. Since women were generally subordinate to men, the employment of women as teachers thus augmented the authority of a largely male administrative staff (Bolin & Panaritis; Tyack; Tyack & Hansot, 1981).

The evaluation of student learning was viewed as a method of determining teacher effectiveness. Learning was seen as a mechanical process that could and should be directed, consisting mainly of memorization of facts. To ensure that teachers

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were teaching the approved curriculum and students were learning, it was not unusual for supervisors to administer tests to students during inspections of the classroom (Barr et al., 1947; Tyack, 1974). "The chief measure of evaluation was the amount of factual recall demonstrated by the students in the prescribed areas of study" (Alfonso et al., 1975, p. 21).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the curriculum in many districts was extended to include special subjects beyond reading, writing, and mathematics (Barr et al., 1947). The principal and teachers were often unprepared to provide instruction in these new subjects. In order to fill this gap, districts would employ a special teacher to travel from school to school to provide instruction. The special teacher would often work from and more closely with the central office than the schools. As the new subjects science, social studies, music, and art became recognized as much a part of a child's education as the previous offerings, classroom teachers were expected to teach all subjects offered in the schools. As a result, the traveling specialist transitioned to a role intended to support schools and teachers throughout the entire district (Barr et al.).

The twentieth century began to usher in changes in the role of supervisors, driven by changes in society. However, the concept of supervision as inspection was well entrenched in the educational setting and continued to influence supervision. As a new bureaucratic organization emerged, the influence of inspection could be seen in and was compatible with the next model of supervision, social efficiency (Alfonso et al., 1975; Glanz, 1998).

Supervision as Social Efficiency

Social efficiency as a supervisory model appeared between 1900 and 1920; however, its presence was felt in educational supervision until the time of the Great Depression (Campbell et al., 1987). The era was shaped by centralization led by business and professional elites, often referred to as *administrative progressives* (Tyack, 1974). Efficiency was viewed as the answer to central problems including industrialization, urbanization, and immigration (Cremin, 1964). As a result, regimentation, efficiency, and economy dominated society. As Thomas Cochran (1972) observed, "On a fundamental level the goals and values of a business oriented culture established the rules of the game; how men were expected to act, what they strove for, and what qualities or achievements were rewarded" (p. 304).

The term *scientific management*, thought to be synonymous with efficiency, became well known throughout every household during this era (Alfonso et al., 1975). Scientific management permeated all aspects of business, industry, and education, and was praised as a method to manage tasks effectively, efficiently, and objectively (Alfonso et al.; Callahan, 1962). Even though Louis Brandeis coined the term, *scientific management*, Frederick Winslow Taylor was credited for defining the principles (Fine, 1997, p. 289). Taylor described the most important element of scientific management in the following statement:

Perhaps the most prominent single element in modern scientific management is the task idea. The work of every workman is fully planned out by the management at least one day in advance, and each man receives in most cases complete written instruction, describing in detail the task which he is to

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accomplish, as well as the means to be used in doing the work. And the work

planned in advance in this way constitutes a task which is to be solved, as

explained above, not by the workman alone, but in almost all cases by the joint

effort of the workman and the management. The task specifies not only what is

to be done but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it

(Taylor, 1911, p. 17).

Researchers such as Dr. Joseph Mayer Rice, pediatrician and educational

reformer, shocked the public in 1892 with a series of reports declaring American

education a disaster and 'unscientific' as compared with other countries (Berube, 1994).

As a result, great efforts were exerted to apply identical standards found in factories to

school districts, schools, and classrooms. Applying these standards to education was

seen as the answer to meet societal needs including the changing needs of industry

and an increasingly multicultural society. It was also seen as the answer for dealing

with teacher ineffectiveness, which was clearly on the minds of the public by this time

(Bolin & Panaritis, 1992; Callahan, 1962). Callahan labeled the educational

administrative bureaucracy of this era a "cult of efficiency" as a result of the influence of

scientific management.

Scientific management sparked the work of others during this era. An example

of a major effort to apply 'scientific management' to education was made by Frank

Bobbitt (1913). Within this research, it was clearly stated that the supervisory members

were responsible for defining the organizational goals. In education, the superintendent

was compared to the plant manager, who must be prepared to organize all forces in his

command, direct them, and supervise them in order to secure the desired product.

Students were referred to as the finished product. Teachers were seen as clearly responsible for the outcome as seen in the following:

> Setting up standards of ultimate attainment can be of but little service unless we have at the same time the necessary scales and methods for measuring the educational product so as to determine with at least reasonable accuracy whether the product rises to standard. Ordinarily, the teacher, if asked whether his eighth-grade pupils could add at the rate of 65 combinations per minute with an accuracy of 94%, could not answer the question or he needs a measuring scale that will serve him in measuring his product as well as the scale of feet and inches serve in measuring the product of the steel plant (Bobbitt, 1913, p. 14). Several years later, Bobbitt compared the entire educational system to a building process and described the need for standards at each grade level based on the needs of the adult citizen. This research influenced the standardization of the curriculum:

> For meeting present-day conditions, our people need a large amount of reliable information. The simple and logical thing to do is discover the information needed, to lay it out in sequential form for the twelve grades of the public school, and then simply to have it studied and mastered. The people need certain well-known skills. The logical thing is to lay out a set of scientifically graded drill exercises that will produce these skills (Bobbitt, 1934, p. 257).

This comparison by Bobbitt further contributed to assessments intended to measure the teacher's efficiency, emphasis on conformity, and adhesion to curriculum, which became commonly used by educational supervisors (Barr, 1931). This practice was

believed to be much more effective than the arbitrary standards previously used (Bolin & Panaritis, 1992).

Scientific management identified leadership methods and positions of authority as well. Reformers of this era viewed the organization as one of good and truth, if only information could be effectively passed from the experts to the workers. Tyack and Hansot (1981) captured the role of the expert leader in the following statement:

> The older millennial vision of the pioneers was subsumed under a new form of consensus in which management and scientific experts acquired an awesome power: an ability to define what was normal and desirable (p. 9).

Well-known scientists such as Edward L. Thorndike advocated for improvements by giving the experts the authority to run businesses and education to everyone's benefit (Alfonso et al., 1975, Campbell et al., 1987; Stetson, 1903). Educational leaders such as Ellwood P. Cubberly (1927) supported this idea by arguing that the organization of schools was inefficient for meeting the needs of society and allowed less qualified people to make critical decisions. "The process is one of subordination, centralization, reorganization, and re-delegation, with a view to producing a unified series of public schools better calculated to meet modern educational conditions and needs" (Cubberley, p. 355).

The impact on education was that decision-making was shifted upward and inward. Boards of education delegated more administrative powers to an expert superintendent and his staff so they could reshape the schools. These new responsibilities resolved any lingering doubts as to whether the superintendence was needed (Anderson & Davies, 1956; Karier, 1982; Norton, 1952; Rogers, 1952).

District level administrators used their newfound powers to define the standards. This information was passed to the specialists, increasingly referred to as supervisors, who delivered the information as directed. Alfonso et al. (1975) compared this new role to the *factory foreman* (p. 21). The major responsibility of the supervisor became one of impacting student learning by controlling teacher behavior. In a similar manner, principals and teachers exercised little judgment, prescribed methods were delivered as precise plans to be followed rather than an outline intended to provide guidance (Alfonso et al.; Bolin & Panaritis, 1992; McNeil, 1982). Barr et al. (1947) argued that while the interaction between the supervisor and the teacher was limited, a great leap forward was taken when compared to previous years. Researchers of a later era, such as Bolin and Panaritis, observed that even with this increased support, teachers were alone in the classroom and there was no guarantee of consistency in implementing the course of study. Alfonso et al. summarized this era as one of leading teacher groups and providing them with the findings.

As school governance and administrative responsibilities became more clearly established, the proliferation of specialized administrative roles emerged. Specialists in the fields of business administration, curriculum development and personnel administration were some of the first positions to be added. In larger urban districts, these positions quickly became even more specialized to include areas such as staff personnel, school business, pupil personnel, data-processing services, federal regulations, and negotiations-contract administration (Anderson & Davies, 1956; Campbell et al., 1987; Lucio & McNeil, 1962).

Scientific management had supporters from many aspects of society, but not everyone supported the concept. Educators were increasingly among those challenging its effectiveness (Alfonso et al., 1975; Berube, 1994; Karier, 1982; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Lucio & McNeil, 1962). A study conducted by Barr and Reppen (1935) left no doubt of teachers' views of supervisors. Among the complaints, it noted that teachers charged supervisors with planning poorly, needlessly distracting the class, promoting fads and set techniques, engaging in purposeless change, and using ratings to make "snap judgments." When asked to evaluate superintendents, no marked differences appeared. Barr and Reppen summarized by stating, "Some teachers are very certain that they would be happier and some are convinced that their work would be more efficient if all supervision were abolished" (p. 12). Glanz (1998) further supported these studies when he noted a teacher's perception of the supervisor as the "snoopervisor" (p. 54).

Educators expressed their frustration with bureaucratic school governance and "factory-type" education employed by supervisors (Glanz, 1998; Tumin, 1963). J.W. Crabtree (1914), President of the State Normal Schools in Wisconsin, wrote:

…the school with all its machinery and equipment is not run for the purpose of providing him a living wage, but for the deep seated purpose of promoting intelligence, education, and love of work among young people (p. 148).

Criticism was also advanced by distinguished college professors. Boyd H. Bode (1935), a professor at Ohio State University, advocated that the schools had a larger responsibility to society and called for schools to assume leadership for social change and end scientific management altogether:

"By transforming the school and the family in the spirit of this newer attitude we

shall discover increasingly the deeper meaning of democracy and shall give a

continuous reinterpretation to our traditional ideals of liberty and equality of

opportunity "(p. 3).

Even though the supervisor's position took its place in the educational hierarchy

during this timeframe, the position between the superintendent and the teacher proved

to be a very vulnerable one. Supervisors had hoped that applying scientific

management to ratings in determining teacher efficiency would give acceptance to their

work, when in fact it had met with resounding failure (Glanz, 1991). H.O. Rugg (1920),

a professor at Lincoln School of Teachers College, expressed the widely held views

when he declared teacher ratings as anti-democratic, unprofessional and inadequate

measures of teachers' efficiency. "Movement to rate teachers is at a standstill. The

movement cannot be said to have succeeded, however. The present writer believes it

needs a new impetus and a new emphasis" (Rugg, p. 674).

Some researchers attributed the call for a new supervisory model to the

recognition that techniques of business and industry would not work in an institution

whose primary function was the education of children (Callahan, 1962). Others merely

saw scientific management as no longer relevant to address what society viewed as the

purpose of education (Ravitch, 1983).

Democratic Supervision

Democratic supervision as a model for supervision emerged in the 1920s and

extended through the mid-1950s (Alfonso et al., 1975; Glanz, 1991, 1998). This

timeframe was greatly influenced by and linked to the Progressive Movement. Some

authors described this movement as the first and most powerful reform in the history of education because of the significant impact on the structure of education (Berube & Berube, 2007; Rederfer, 1985).

At the onset of this model, society was facing many complex issues sparked by a number of national events. One such event occurred in 1917 when President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war on Germany, the beginning of American involvement in World War I. Glanz (1998) described how Wilson incarnated the progressive movement by calling for the country to "make the world safe for democracy" (p. 54). During this era, democratic principles of governance made their way into all areas of society and organizational governance including educational administration and instructional supervision (Alfonso et al., 1975; Barr et al., 1947). Education became a focus as the public increasingly recognized the school as an institution that could influence human development as well as transfer sound democratic social order within society (Barr et al.; Berube, 1994).

This new wave of reform addressed the relationship between teachers and supervisors, but it also shifted the goals of education. The shift was away from intellectual development and mastery of subject matter to concern for social and emotional development and the adoption of "functional" objectives related to areas such as vocation, health, and family life (Brueckner, 1947; Gross & Gross, 1975; Ravitch, 1983). This change also alleviated fears that instructional methods were not developing the students' full intellectual ability by expanding the focus on areas other than the core academic subjects (Gross & Gross; Ravitch, 1983).

The most profound and comprehensive treatment of democracy in education can be found in the work of John Dewey (Berube, 1994; Campbell et al., 1987; Glanz, 1998; Ravitch, 1983). Dewey's work provided a strong philosophical rationale that widely appealed to educators following World War I. Dewey advocated for education to be built upon individual differences and linked to practical objectives intended to prepare the student for life. Moderating the role of authority in the classroom was considered critical in assisting students to learn self-discipline as well as creative habits (Campbell et al.). Dewey (1903) was convinced that the societal needs were not reflected in the educational system. He challenged educators to implement structures that reflected democratic principles of society:

>...the school has lagged behind the general contemporary social movement; and much that is unsatisfactory, much of the conflict and of defect, comes from the discrepancy between the relatively undemocratic organization of the school, as it affects the mind of both teacher and pupil, and the growth and extension of the democratic principle in life beyond the school doors (Dewey, p. 193).

The research of this era focused on human factors, and as a result, most educators came to regard democratic supervision and human relations as essentially the same (Campbell et al., 1987). The focus also included factors that were thought to be important determinants of the efficiency and effectiveness of the worker. The Hawthorne Studies, carried out by Elton Mayo and others, equated to treating employees well. These studies were thought to be the forerunner of the progressive movement (Gillespie, 1991). Findings from these studies identified increased productivity among employees when interaction increased. This research also identified

the quality and kind of interaction within the organization as impacting morale and productivity (Campbell et al.; Carlson, 1996; Cook, 1967; Gillespie; Lovell & Wiles, 1983).

Additional research such as Gestalt psychology supported the shift to a more democratic approach. Gestalt psychology emphasized how the whole individual must be considered because of the impact on the situation (Alfonso et al., 1975; Parrish, 1928). Ogden (1928) applied Gestalt psychology to the organization as a whole and discussed the need for a unification of the parts. This research is credited with bringing new attention to the internal worlds of teachers and supervisors, feelings and relationships as well as facts (Pajak & Seyfarth, 1983).

The research of Kurt Lewin and his associates built upon the idea that the social climate of a work group influences productivity. This research was unique in that it went outside the realm of industry, examining different educational settings for children (Campbell et al., 1987). Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) simulated three different educational settings including a laissez-faire atmosphere, an autocratic atmosphere, and a democratic atmosphere. The findings demonstrated that children in the democratic setting were more productive, socially satisfied, and responded less aggressively than children in the other two settings. It was also observed that the children in the democratic setting demonstrated more independence, originality, and productivity.

The public increasingly called for educational supervisors to avail themselves to the techniques that emerged from these new scenarios of psychology and sociology (Gross & Gross, 1975; Wiles, 1980). Democratic and human relations views were

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attractive to administrators for a number of reasons. Bureaucratization and growth

brought about unprecedented problems related to span of control within large schools

and districts. Superintendents and other administrators now relied on the experience of

principals and teachers (Miller, 1942). In addition, administrators did not enjoy tenure

like teachers. Their professional success depended on their capacity to gain support for

the policies and programs that they administered (Swift, 1971). The changing

environments in the schools and need for improved public relations caused

administrators to view supervision in a different way (Campbell et al., 1987).

Educational supervisors also wanted to separate themselves from the inspectoral

supervision of the past and tried to alter the perception of their roles to a more

democratic function (Campbell et al., 1987; Glanz, 1998). As a result, the supervisor's

roles became more supporting and sharing rather than directing (Campbell et al.; Glanz,

1991; Gross & Gross, 1975; Wiles, 1980). In many districts, the title of educational

supervisor was replaced by *consultant, resource person, helping teacher,* or *coordinator*

(Barr et al., 1947; Lovell & Wiles, 1983). It was not unusual for superintendents to

announce that the new role was to be utilized as a resource and had no authority within

the organization. In working with teachers, the supervisor no longer provided the

teacher with an exact plan to be followed but involved them in the development of the

plan. The chief effect upon supervision was the use of cooperative procedures in the

formulation of policies, plans and procedures, as well as the evaluation of the results

(Barr et al.). Consequentially, the responsibility for school improvement shifted from the

supervisor to the school (Lovell & Wiles). Evidence of the change can clearly be seen

in the writings of Bartky (1956), as he described the role of the supervisor during the latter part of this era:

In reality the central office supervisor is not a supervisor at all but an educational expert; she is an educator rather than an administrator. It is her task to present the facts and her interpretation of them. It is the principal's task to accept or reject that interpretation…If he accepts it, he does so because she has made her presentation convincingly... (pp. 231-232).

During this era, the supervisor continued to receive persistent criticism from teachers. This criticism was attributed to a number of factors including the past role of the supervisor as inspector, the lack of specialized training for supervisors, and the nebulous distinction between supervision and administration (Glanz, 1991; Otto, 1946). Lovell and Wiles (1983) stated that democratic supervision did not necessarily advance the credibility of the position as supervisors had hoped. While this model worked in some cases, in all too many it did not. Supervisors waited to be called to the school, which often resulted in loss of contact. "When they were there, supervisors were often more interested in being 'democratic' than in helping teachers identify and solve problems" (Lovell & Wiles, 1983, p. 34). Alfonso et al. (1975) stated that waiting for teachers to identify and move forward the issues was not the intent of a democratic approach to supervision. In addition, the sharing of responsibilities was never meant to set aside the supervisor's position within the organization.

Bolin and Panaritis (1992) described how the committee who developed the *Seventh Yearbook of the Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction,* later known as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, failed to reach

consensus on a satisfactory definition of supervision. As a result, textbooks such as the one written by Barr et al. (1947), *Supervision,* became popular because they attempted to define supervision. In this textbook, supervision was defined as "an expert technical service primarily concerned with studying and improving the conditions that surround learning and pupil growth" (p. 11). Other books such as George Kyte's (1930), *How to Supervise*, also became popular. Kyte defined supervision as "the maximum development of the teacher into the most professionally efficient person she is capable of becoming" (p. 45).

Supervisors still sought other methods to attain recognition for their work in the schools and legitimize their role. In 1921 the *National Conference of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction* was organized. By 1929, the organization changed its name to the *Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction* and was a separate department within the *National Education Association.* The organization maintained its separate identity until 1943 when it merged with the *Society of Curriculum Study* to become the department of *Supervision and Curriculum Development of the NEA* (Alfonso et al., 1975; Glanz, 1991; Karier, 1982). While the organization had respectable membership at the onset with nearly 1,600 members, by the mid-thirties it had lost about 50% of its membership (Glanz, 1991). This change was an indication of the continuing struggles that supervisors were experiencing.

Scientific Supervision

The endorsement of democracy as the impetus for supervision did not occur in isolation. A different model, scientific supervision, began to emerge simultaneously during the 1920s and 1930s but was utilized by many supporters as a form of

democratic supervision. While this model was built upon science, similar to scientific

management, the two models were very different. This model was characterized by

pre-war progressivism and was built upon democracy, as well as science and scientific

method (Ravitch, 1983).

Scientific supervision was thought to be compatible with democratic supervision

(Glanz, 1991), and thus, appealed to progressives and supporters of scientific

management. Progressives saw scientific supervision as a method to validate reforms

of the progressive movement using science (Ravitch, 1983). John Dewey, a supporter

of the progressive movement, was a strong advocate for cooperative problem-solving

and critical thinking. He promoted this model for solving educational problems in the

classroom and outside the classroom (Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Ravitch). Lucio and McNeil

(1962) stated that proponents of scientific management supported scientific supervision

partly as a protest against what they saw as confusion of goals that emerged from the

democratic movement. One example can be seen in Frank Bobbitt, most closely

associated with efficiency and influential in applying standardization to the curriculum.

Bobbitt encouraged supervisors to utilize scientific supervision as the Progressive

Movement emerged. This model was viewed as a method for ensuring the

establishment of standards in areas such as teacher preparation programs as well as

the selection of instructional methods (McNeil, 1982).

Barr (1931) believed that the era was the culmination of many years of research

that laid the foundation for scientific supervision:

It is not easy to mark the exact time and place of the beginnings of scientific

supervision, since these beginnings are inextricably interwoven with the scientific

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study of education itself and with the larger movement of scientific study of

physical and biological phenomena (Barr, 1931, p. 1).

Barr (1931) attributed the release of the studies by Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius,*

with setting scientific supervision in motion.

Paul Rankin (1934), Chairman of the *Seventh Yearbook of the Department of*

Supervisors and Directors of Instruction, provided further evidence of the acceptance of

scientific supervision. Rankin tagged scientific supervision as a method to make

educational advances possible. He identified guidelines required for scientific

supervision to occur, which included: (a) basis upon the facts, (b) quantitative

description of the facts, (c) suspended judgment, (d) concern for all relevant facts, (e)

sensitivity to the problem, (f) efforts to discover rather than to prove, (g) continuous

appraisal, and (h) the quest for ever more inclusive generalization (p. 4).

Scientific supervision was used to justify the use of wide-scale testing (McNeil,

1982). Testing was not limited to students, but standards for teacher performance were

also being established using national teacher examinations. Administrators such as

Jasper Palmer (1929) of the New York Public Schools and Harry Baker (1935) of the

Detroit Public Schools increasingly acknowledged standardized testing as a fair method

of measuring students. While there was an increase in testing, educators and

researchers urged the use of additional criteria in evaluating students and teachers. For

example, Palmer called for testing related to intelligence quotient (I. Q.) to be

accompanied by testing such as the educational quotient (E. Q.) and achievement

quotient (A. Q.). During this era, boards of education and administrators were

encouraged to use *National Teacher Examinations* in the selection of teachers (Collins,

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1940; Wood, 1940), while some researchers felt the use of such examinations would harm the profession (Rowland, 1940). Still others acknowledged that interesting developments had occurred in the use of the *National Teachers Examination*, but also cautioned against using this instrument as the only criteria for selecting teachers, which can be seen in the following:

> The need of better criteria against which to validate the various measures of teaching efficiency continues important. More prediction studies are needed. In a large measure the success of the whole program to secure better qualified teachers rests upon our ability to designate reliably what constitutes teaching efficiency (Barr, 1943, p. 221).

During this era, there were educators who were not completely convinced of the compatibility of science and human relations. Even though A. S. Barr was identified as a supporter of scientific supervision, there is evidence that he was not necessarily convinced of the compatibility of scientific methods and democracy, which was demonstrated in his writing. In 1931, Barr wrote a textbook entitled, *An Introduction to the Scientific Study of the Classroom.* In this book, he asserted that current methods of educational research were not adequate and supervision needed to find its own methods of science. He felt that teaching needed to be broken down into the different elements and studied individually (Barr, 1931). In 1933, A.S. Barr again expressed his early concerns with applying scientific methods to democratic supervision. While he agreed that science in education could help in understanding simple phenomena, he argued that it was not always applicable to human relationships and should only be accepted with experimental verification (Barr, 1933). It was ten years later that Barr

(1943) wrote another article in which he expressed his concerns with the lack of findings produced by scientific methods.

As a result of concerns with scientific supervision, McNeil (1982) described how scientific supervision experienced a change in the early 1940s. Initially, scientific methods continued to be generated by the supervisor. As democratic supervision became increasingly embraced by the public, proponents of scientific supervision sought new ways to incorporate democratic methods. As a result, methods were no longer developed by the supervisor in isolation and then passed to the teacher. The focus of the research was centered on the instructional problems as identified by the participating teacher. The teacher became an active participant and collaborator in the process:

> Supervisors were to help teachers apply scientific methods and attitudes only in so far as those methods and attitudes were consistent with the social values of the day. The formulating of hypotheses, the selecting of appropriate research designs, and the statistical analysis found in the action research centered on instructional problems of importance to the participating teacher (McNeil, p. 29).

Supervisors of the era were still in search of recognition of their position as significant to the organization. Supervisors had hoped that scientific supervision would elevate their status by validating their work among teachers and administrators. For many supervisors this model was initially viewed as the ideal because it allowed the supervisor to utilize efficient, cooperative, and scientific methods to improve instruction (Glanz, 1991).

Attempts to distinguish themselves from administrators and autocratic methods never came to pass. Even though scientific supervision was viewed as a method to advance innovation, very few scientific findings of the period had validity. Researchers and supervisors were criticized for their lack of quantitative methods and their failure to conceptually address the problems (Hodgkinson, 1957). The failure to adequately address the needs of students for earning a living was increasingly seen. At the 1956 *National Convention for the American Association of School Administrators,* William Grede, Past President for the National Association for Manufacturers, blamed the shortage of well-trained workers on the schools, and challenged educators to adequately prepare students for work and life in a competitive economy (Grede, 1956). Teachers and other educators continued to criticize supervisors for their anti-democratic methods. Supervisors found themselves torn between their administrative obligation to the superintendent and their obligation to teachers (Glanz, 1991). There was also little evidence to suggest that scientific supervision ever really gained momentum in the schools (Glanz, 1991; Ravitch, 1983). By the 1960s, the public began to raise the question as to whether they wanted teachers spending more and more time engaged in research, not necessarily aimed at any particular goal, or providing instruction in the classroom. As a result, action research was re-delegated from the teacher and supervisor to technical researchers (Hodgkinson).

Glanz (1998) describes how supervisors aligned with curriculum workers in an attempt to gain recognition. In 1943, a merger took place and the new organization became the *Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development.* Three years later, the name was changed to the *Association of Supervision and Curriculum*

Development (Glanz, 1998; Perkins-Gough & Snyder, 2003). While supervisors had

been consciously trying to separate from administration, Pajak (1993) described how

the founding of ASCD actually brought administration and supervision closer:

> "At the time of ASCD founding, supervision in education witnessed an
>
> unprecedented convergence of educational theory, national policy, and social
>
> science research. This alignment culminated in a consensus that democratic
>
> educational leadership comprised the essence of supervisory practice" (p. 165).

Supervision as an Agent of Change

The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of a new model of supervision fueled by

growing discontent traced to the late 1940s and early 1950s. Researchers and authors

described how the educational pendulum began to swing back toward a revival of

progressivism and called for less focus on the supervisor as a democratic leader and

more focus on the supervisor as an agent of change (Cremin, 1964; Helwig, 1968;

McCoy, 1961; Pajak, 1993; Ravitch, 1983). Policy discussions, spiced with words like

"creative self-expression" and "intrinsic motivation," quickly yielded to discussions

around "accelerated change" and "innovation" (Cremin; McCoy; Pajak, 1993; Ravitch,

1983). The primary concerns of critics were the failure to recognize emerging issues

and continuing to utilize practices of the past, thus maintaining the status quo (Ravitch,

1983).

Kenneth Benne (1949) introduced the concept of supervision as a change agent

as a method to challenge the status quo. Benne believed that by acting as a change

agent, the supervisor could lead planned instructional change and keep the organization

moving forward. Even though the concept did not immediately receive recognition,

dissatisfaction continued to grow and was seen in the writings of J. Chester Swanson (1956), Superintendent of Schools in Oklahoma City. In the *Official Report* from the *National Convention of School Administrators*, he wrote, "There are too many persons today for whom schools have done very little" (p. 30). This growing discontent, fueled by national events, caused the public to demand that the federal government become involved and initiate improvements in America's schools. Citizens were now aware of the influence of education in determining the future of society (Lovell & Wiles, 1983). As a result, this era witnessed a significant rise in federal involvement in the public schools.

A major event that drew attention to education occurred on October 4, 1957. When the Soviet Union launched the first successful manned space flight, Americans were shocked. This event ended the debate over the quality of schools (Garrett, 2008; Ravitch, 1983; Van Til, 1965). Critics of education, such as Admiral Hyman Rickover, known as the father of the nuclear submarine, accused the schools of endangering national security and called for a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Ravitch, 1983). Increased federal involvement in the public schools was supported by people of all political backgrounds. Even though President Eisenhower had opposed general federal aid to schools on the grounds that it would lead to increased federal control, reactions to Sputnik prompted Congress to pass the *National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Ravitch, 1983).

Education witnessed federal involvement as the result of Sputnik as well as other societal issues such as the Civil Rights Movement between 1954 and 1968. Berube (1994) identified this movement as the second major reform movement in the history of education. The principle of "separate but equal" validated by the Supreme Court's

decision in *Plessy versus Ferguson* in 1896 was overturned as it related to the field of education on May 17, 1954, *with Brown versus the Topeka Board of Education* (Williams, 1988, p. 34). This decision as well as subsequent court decisions and congressional legislation bestowed basic human rights to a segment of the population within the schools that had been previously denied.

The Coleman Report, released in 1966, supported the changes that were beginning to occur (Ascik 1984; Ravitch, 1983). This report drew attention to the performance gap between students from different income families. Family background, more than the effects of schooling, was identified as the reason for the difference in student performance. This report reinforced the need for Chapter I and Compensatory Head Start Programs. In addition, this report encouraged the study of schools that had been successful in increasing achievement of low socio-economic students. Ascik further implied that this report led to a new line of study launched during the next decade, now known as the Effective Schools Movement. Action research became a means to shatter complacency rather than a means for the teacher and the supervisor to work together (Hefferman & Bishop, 1965).

During this timeframe, supervision experienced a radical transformation, characterized by great efforts to demonstrate educational change and innovation (Alfonso et al., 1975; Pajak, 1993). Democratic methods, as the sole source of leadership and supervision, lost momentum, and leadership and supervision were viewed as functions of the position (Alfonso et al.; Helwig, 1968; Pajak, 1993; Toepfer Jr., 1973). As a result, supervision as an agent of change was viewed as an opportunity to revive and empower the supervisor who had often been ignored under the previous

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method of democratic leadership (Klohr, 1965). Even though researchers and authors

of the timeframe urged supervisors to involve teachers in systemic change, the general

descriptions of the era suggested supervisors were challenged to become more

assertive in their work and became more concerned with changing the behavior of

teachers than involving them (Drummond, 1964; Hefferman & Bishop, 1965; Helwig,

1968; Pajak et al., 1998; Ravitch, 1983; Sand, 1965; Van Til, 1965). The purpose of the

supervisor changed overnight from concern for the needs of students and problems of

the teachers to responding to the needs of society (Cunningham, 1963; Neville, 1966;

Ogletree, 1972; Pajak et al., 1998; Sommerville, 1971). While researchers debated the

methods and functions of the supervisor, research also recognized the increased

complexity of the supervisor's role (Babcock, 1965; Glanz, 1998; Klohr; Lucio & McNeil;

Sand; Van Til). Lucio and McNeil (1962) described the new role of the supervisor as

requiring 'super vision' (p. 46). Lucio and McNeil captured this idea in a description of

four functions identified as necessary for the supervisor: (a) forecasting consequences

of procedures and change, (b) balancing and assimilating relevant cultural resources,

(c) systematically ordering procedures for change, and (d) liberating human spirit in

cooperatively developing a new perspective (p. 46).

As supervisors responded to the call for change, programs and goals were

scrapped and new educational plans took their place. Curriculum changes dominated

education, and as a result, the role of the educational supervisor and the curriculum

developer became blurred (Wiles & Bondi, 1986). The instructional focus changed from

training students for adjusting to the problems of the day to developing the knowledge of

students to solve problems of today as well as the future (McCoy, 1961).

Proposals for change were thrust upon education from sources external to the school districts (Lovell & Wiles, 1983). With new funds from foundations and the government, school systems experimented with new "teacher-proof" curricula, new staffing patterns, new technology, and new models of professional development for teachers (Ravitch, 1983, p. 233). Examples of proposed changes were team teaching, computer-assisted instruction, open classrooms, non-graded programs and a variety of packaged materials (Lovell & Wiles; Ravitch, 1983).

Efforts by supervisors during the 1940s and 1950s to give teachers more power were rescinded (Pajak, 1993). To add to the issues with which supervisors were confronted, militancy among teacher unions emerged in 1967 and continued into the next decade (Morris & Morris, 1976). Approximately one hundred strikes occurred throughout the nation in 1976 over salaries and working conditions (Morris & Morris).

The *National Education Association (NEA)* had previously been an umbrella organization for virtually all associations of professional educators prior to this time. The major objectives of the *National Education Association (NEA)* were to raise professional standards, promote public support, and increase the quality of public education (Campbell et al., 1987). The only competitor the organization had was the *American Federation of Teachers (AFT).* The platform of the AFT called for the right of teachers to organize and affiliate with labor. The stunning victory of *United Federation of Teachers*, a New York City affiliate of *AFT*, for exclusive representation rights of New York teachers was a turning point for the *NEA*. By 1968, the *NEA* responded by adopting the labor-orientation philosophy of AFT. By 1975, all departments whose members were not teachers had become independent (Campbell et al.).

The supervisor during this era did not obtain the status that some authors had

predicted (Klohr, 1965), nor did innovations during the 1960s and 1970s obtain the

desired results that were needed (Lovell & Wiles, 1983). Numerous changes had

occurred in a short period of time leading to overextended curriculums and ambiguous

goals. The first indications that schools were not achieving the desired results were

declining achievement coupled with rising costs (Lovell & Wiles; Wiles & Bondi, 1986).

While the 1980s ushered in another view of leadership and supervision, it did not occur

without attempts from reformers to revive supervision in terms of behaviors and

relationships (Benne, 1949; Harris, 1985; Lovell & Wiles). One such notable model that

emerged was Clinical Supervision.

Clinical Supervision

Clinical Supervision appeared during the 1970s and continued through the

1980s. This model developed parallel to *supervision as a change agent*. Researchers

and authors had varying views of the importance of this model. Some historical

accounts of education identified clinical supervision as a separate model (Glanz, 1998).

Pajak (1993) placed Clinical Supervision under the previous model, supervision as an

agent of change, but also identified components of democratic supervision within the

model. Bolin and Panaritis (1992) identified Clinical Supervision as significant because

it was rooted in an educational process defined in behavioral terms. While it could be

argued that clinical supervision should be discussed under the subtitles, Democratic

Supervision or Supervision as an Agent of Change, it is being presented separately

here due to the attention it received throughout the literature (Bolin & Panaritis; Glanz,

1998; Glickman, 1990; Harris, 1985; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Mosler & Purpel, 1972; Pajak, 1993).

Clinical Supervision is most often credited to the work of Morris Cogan and his colleagues. The model originated at Harvard University as a method to work with student teachers (Mosler & Purpel, 1972); however, attempts were made to adapt the model to other professions (Bolin & Pararitis, 1992). Several authors claim that this model emerged in education as the result of dissatisfaction with the traditional supervisory practices and models (Bolin & Pararitis; Glanz, 1998). As many new demands were thrust upon supervisors during the 1970s and 1980s, Glanz (1998) described how this model was developed to address the lack of focus and sound conceptual base to guide practice in the field. Evidence of this notion can be seen in the writing of Goldhammer (1969) when he stated that the model was "motivated, primarily, by contemporary views of weaknesses that commonly exist in education practice" (p. 1).

A continuation of the teacher's professional growth was the central objective for clinical supervision (Cogan, 1973). During this timeframe, most teachers were wary of supervisory activities based on past experiences. Cogan argued that very few teachers can improve without the continuing collaboration of the expert supervisors and presented this model as a viable option for involving the teacher in change efforts (Cogan). Through this model, Cogan coined the term "collegiality," which was used to refer to the relationship between the supervisor and those being supervised. Glickman (1990) described clinical supervision as direct human assistance to teachers. Lovell and Wiles (1983) described clinical supervision as:

…An effort by the instructional supervisory behavior system to interact directly with a teacher or team of teachers to provide support, help, and service to those teachers in order to improve their performance as they work with a particular group of students (p. 168).

Clinical supervision placed emphasis on classroom observations, which Cogan (1973) identified as the distinguishing characteristic. The model listed phases within an improvement cycle, which Cogan felt should be monitored and adjusted according to the relationship between the teacher and the supervisor (Garman, 1982). The structured process was an attempt to move toward better control and greater expertise among teachers. In this model, Cogan identified eight phases of clinical supervision required to constitute a full cycle of supervision. These areas included (a) establishing teacher-supervisor relations, (b) planning with the teacher, (c) planning the observation, (d) observing instruction, (e) analyzing the teaching-learning processes, (f) planning the strategy of the conference, (g) conferencing, and (h) renewed planning (pp. 10-11). Lovell and Wiles (1983) deemed it was less restrictive and equally accurate to label the phases of clinical supervision under three interdependent dimensions: (a) pre-observation behavior, (b) observation behavior, and (c) post-observation behavior (p. 172). Even though this model gained general support from educators (Bolin & Panaritis, 1992; Glanz, 1991), the model failed to gain wide acceptance (Garman & Hazi, 1988; Glanz, 1991; Pajak, 1993). Some authors attributed this lack of support to the narrow focus on classroom events when society was calling for a change in curriculum (Pajak, 1993).

Supervision during this era remained inspectional at times (Glanz, 1998). The positive impact on the preservation of democratic leadership at a time in which supervisors were being encouraged to be less democratic was a major strength of clinical supervision. The emergence of this model was evidence of the lingering impact of democratic supervision as well as the ambiguity that still revolved around the role of the supervisor.

Supervision as Leadership

The 1980s led a new decade of reform brought on by claims that educational standards were mediocre at best and were not keeping pace with changes in society and advances in technology. This criticism was reinforced by the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* published by the U.S. Department of Education (Pajak & Seyfarth, 1983; Toppo, 2008). This publication, the result of two years of work by a Blue Ribbon Commission, found poor student achievement at every level of the educational system (Toppo). The report drew the attention of all facets of society by declaring current educational standards as insufficient to meet the needs of students. "…The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, p. 1). In addition, the report implied that such mediocrity within the schools was jeopardizing the future economy of the country (Cuban & Usdan, 2003; Toppo).

Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the

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problem, but it is the one that under girds American prosperity, security, and

civility (U.S. Department of Education, p. 1).

School-based change received wide-spread recognition in a flurry of reform efforts

following the release of *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.* As a

result, the Excellence Movement emerged, characterized by increased standards for

students and teachers, as well as a revived involvement from the business community

(Hunt, 2008).

During the era, research in business elevated the role of the *chief executive*

officer (Ackoff, 1994; Bass, 1985; Pajak, 1993). As effective schools research emerged,

the focus in education shifted to the administrator, particularly the principal (Ascik, 1984;

Boston, 1982; Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweiter, & Wisenbaker, 1979; De Bevoise,

1984; Edmonds, 1979; Frederiksen, 1975; Lezotte, Edmonds, & Ratner, 1974;

Mayeske, Okada, Beaton, Cohen, & Wisler, 1972; Olson, 1986). With leadership in

business and education at the core of research, a new alignment was encouraged

(Levine, 1986; Pajak, 1993). This alignment resulted in leadership models and theories

from business becoming widely applied to education.

Research during this timeframe focused on the relationship between the leader

and subordinates, and several different leadership models emerged. Douglas

McGregor's (1960) *Theory X and Theory Y* argued that the leader's style was largely

dependent on assumptions about the members of the organization. William Reddin's

(1970) *3-D Theory of Leadership* identified four basic styles of leadership including (a)

related, high on relationship and low on task, (b) *integrated*, high on relationship and

high on task, (c) *dedicated*, high on task and low on relationship, and (d) *separated*, low

on relationship and low on task (Reddin, pp. 12-13). Hershey and Blanchard's (1977) model, *Situational Leadership*, expanded upon this work and utilized the four basic styles to demonstrate how each can be effective or ineffective depending on the situation. Another popular model was Blake and Mouton's (1975) *Managerial Grid*. This model suggested two criterion that supervisors must consider, 'concern for people' and 'concern for productivity.'

In addition, business and education began to focus heavily on four concepts including *vision*, *culture*, *reflection,* and *transformation* (Pajak, 1993, p. 172). The first study to identify *vision* as critical to leadership was conducted in a business environment (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Wiles and Bondi (1986) applied this concept to education. In both business and education, the leader's vision was stressed as critical to the whole organization. The focus on the *culture* of an organization, described as very similar in the business community and the educational community, called attention to social influences that impact productivity (Pajak et al., 1998; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Senge, 1990). *Reflective practitioner*, first coined in business, described the behaviors of the leader to critically review the current situation and determine future direction (Schon, 1983). Transformational leadership was utilized to describe how leaders assisted group members in pursuit of common goals focused on higher levels of needs and values (Burns, 1978). Bass (1985) explained how this model was built on *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, and the transformational leader moved followers from their own self-interest to the good of the organization.

While the 1980s brought significant changes to the functions of the supervisor, changes could also be observed in job titles and education hierarchies. Administrators

and supervisors tried to work with teachers, but barriers were increasingly evident such as a result of the unionization of teachers (Wiles & Bondi, 1986). It was during this time that many supervisors had jobs abolished due to demands of union negotiations. As a result, many supervisors followed the line of administrators into managerial roles. Beginning in the mid-1980s supervisors held jobs with an assortment of job titles (Glatthorn, 1998; Wiles & Bondi) and were now considered a part of administrative teams in most districts (Wiles & Bondi).

The *Excellence Movement* had promoted the involvement of administrators and supervisors in more leadership activities; however, the movement was perceived as top-down and as a reversion to a management model by most educators (Hunt, 2008). This realignment of supervision with administration further reinforced the historical role of the supervisor as one of control, when in reality it only demonstrated that the role had yet to be defined (Deal, 1987). The *Excellence Movement* revived disillusion with public education, which ushered in a major change driven by bottom-up decision-making (Pajak, 1993).

<div align="center">Current Influences</div>

Restructuring Movement

A new movement, the *Restructuring Movement*, emerged in the 1990s partly as a reaction to the previous era. This movement is most recognized for two separate initiatives, site-based management and a call for national standards (Hunt, 2008). The movement was widely accepted as strategy based and change oriented, which was a criticism of the previous era (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

In 1989, President George H. W. Bush held a summit for governors across the nation to address the need for national goals and standards. A recommendation for six national goals, later developed and referred to as *Goals 2000,* emerged (Dufour & Eaker, 1998, pp. 4-5). From these standards, the *National Center on Education and the Economy* developed a system for a national exam, supporting a new level of accountability (Dufour & Eaker). In 1994, Congress established the *National Education Standards and Improvement Council* to review and approve standards at the national and state levels. A second summit was held in 1996. In order to avoid the perception of increased federal involvement in the schools, the responsibility for standards was transferred to the state and responsibility for developing national standards was passed to professional organizations and curriculum specialists (Dufour & Eaker).

The second prong of this movement related to restructuring within districts and schools. This change called for the transfer of decision-making to the schools in determining strategies for achieving the newly established national goals (Conti, Ellsasser, & Griffin, 2000; Dufour & Eaker, 1998). This movement made its way from business and highlighted the benefits of involving factory workers in changing their work roles (Walker, 2004). Educators viewed this change as an effort to challenge the status quo and move away from a traditional top-down, bureaucratic approach (Hunt, 2008).

Site-based management quickly gained momentum among educators and researchers (Amundson, 1988; Arterbury, 1991; Bailey, 1992; Champlin, 1987; Conley, 1996; David, 1996; Finn, 1991; Hess, 1995; Murphy, 1989; Myers & Simpson, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1992). Some researchers called for changes in leadership methods for those in positions of authority, promoting a focus on human relations by administrators

and supervisors (Sergiovanni, 1992). Other researchers called for participatory decision-making at the school level (David), while still others not only challenged the traditional structure but also argued for moving the formula for governance to the school as well (Finn; Myers & Simpson).

Many states responded by enacting laws requiring site-based management, such as one seen in North Carolina (Site-based management and accountability program, North Carolina General Statue 115C-105.20, Article 8B, 1996). Boards of education also responded by adopting policies supporting decentralization and the flattening of the organization (Hunt, 2008). Between 1986 and 1990 approximately one-third of all districts across the nation had some form of site-based management (Ogawa & White, 1994). Today, many districts across the nation still are under the umbrella of board policies related to site-based management, such as the policy enacted in September 1991 by Wake County Board of Education, Raleigh, North Carolina (Wake County Board of Education, 1991). This policy recognizes the research that emerged during the 1990's and encourages the decentralization of decision-making as a method to improve achievement for all students.

While site-based management called for a different role for the teacher, it also called for different roles for central office staff (Arterbury, 1991). Rather than delivering uniform policies and monitoring implementation, supervisors were expected to serve as resources, and they were encouraged to promote differences among the schools. Arterbury captured the change in the role of the supervisor, as well as the role strongly embedded in the minds of educators and the public when he stated:

Many central office staff have been viewed as isolated from the campuses, as experts or specialists in particular academic areas. In site-based decision making, they will be become integrated into various campus activities. They may provide training, coordinate district level human and materials resources for the campus, support school autonomy, and share decision making (p. 3).

While some research cited site-based management as necessary for significant curriculum and instructional changes (Conti et al., 2000; Finn, 1991; Mohrman & Wholstetter, 1994; Purkey & Smith, 1985; Robertson, Wohlstettler, & Mohrman, 1995), Hanson (1993) questioned whether site-based management supported accountability. Other researchers agreed, and the method became increasingly challenged for the failure to show gains in student achievement (Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Odden, 1995; Smylie, 1994). Odden stated that too often site-based management caused a *Christmas Tree Approach* to problem-solving (p. 2). This claim was made partly due to what Odden viewed as a lack of coherent focus or sense of direction in which schools were randomly choosing programs to address the issues. Other researchers described how site-based management increased teacher involvement in peripheral issues but failed to increase the focus on instructional issues (Dufour & Eaker; Newmann & Wehlage; Smylie).

While the *Restructuring Movement* is best known for site-based management and national goals, schools of choice also began to emerge during this timeframe. By 1998, more than 20 states had adopted some form of parental choice (Duffy, 1998). Researchers such as Chubb and Moe (1990) called for more choice while critics such as Albert Shanker (1990) challenged the concept as a method for improving schools.

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The major criticism of the restructuring movement has included the failure to yield agreement on what changes should be adopted to increase student achievement as well as actual improvements in student achievement (Duffy, 1998; Dufour & Eaker, 1998). While this research did acknowledge proponents on both sides of the issues related to site-based management and schools of choice, Duffy further criticized the restructuring movement for the failure to take a systemic approach. Even though the remnants of the restructuring movement still exist within schools today, another movement, the *Standards Movement*, emerged simultaneously to address student achievement (Berry et al., 2006; Guskey, 2007; Larson, 2007; Odland, 2007/2008; Protheroe, 2008).

Standards Movement

The *Standards Movement*, an attempt to refocus on the needs of all children, was highlighted by *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* (Berry et al., 2006; Guskey, 2007; Larson, 2007; Odland, 2007/2008; Protheroe, 2008). This movement, strongly rooted in *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Toppo, 2008), further shifted the focus to the schools by redirecting attention from the teacher to student achievement (Hunt, 2008; Sipple & Killeen, 2004). Hunt attributed the push for standards to the actions of educators during the peak of the restructuring movement. Even though researchers such as Goodlad and Oakes (1988) cautioned against the failure to address the needs of all students, teachers and principals had given attention to the school's overall progress on standardized assessment data but failed to address the performance of individual students. "In many instances, the averages masked the comparatively poor performance of students in specific subgroups" (Hunt, p. 582). The

parameters for the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (2002) now required schools to

look at all subgroups of students with serious sanctions for failing to do so. While the

focus shifted, the necessity for shared decision-making was never erased and the

Restructuring Movement became intertwined with the *Standards Movement* (Baur &

Bogotch, 2006).

Some educators feared that *Goals 2000* would be eliminated by *NCLB.* While it

became apparent that *Goals 2000* would not be eliminated, school improvement did

narrow in scope to only address areas tested under *NCLB.* In addition, the focus turned

away from the central office with a laser-like focus on the schools. The expectation was

that principals would work with the teachers to address the performance of each child

(Hunt, 2008).

Challenges

At the onset of the *Restructuring Movement*, the focus shifted to the schools. A

decade later, the *Standards Movement* increased the focus even more on the schools.

As a result, research centered on schools led by dedicated principals and teachers,

described by Dwyer, Barnett, and Lee (1987) as the *Great Hope* (pp. 30-32). Fifteen

years later, Togneri and Anderson (2003a) described these successes as "isolated

islands of excellence" (p. 1). These pockets of success could rarely be replicated or

sustained (Copland, 2003; Cuban, 2008; Fullan, 2001; Good, 2008; Togneri &

Anderson, 2003a). Cuban (2008) further summarized flawed assumptions for seeking

answers in these individual schools:

And efforts to shift the responsibility for change from the shoulders of at-risk

children to the backs of school professionals have frequently exhausted those

professionals, have often been limited to small numbers of schools, and have

seldom spread throughout school systems (p. 77).

While Gerald Grant (2009) concurred with the difficulty often encountered in replicating

pockets of excellence, he also warned educators and researchers of the potential

negative impact on the parents and students: "…lighthouse schools could be found in

really every city, but they gave false hope to children trapped in collapsing urban

schools…" (p. 117).

Even though the weaknesses in the charismatic leadership theories are

recognized (Togneri & Anderson, 2003a; Yukl, 1999), research shows that the principal

is second only to the classroom teacher in influencing student achievement (Fullan,

2010a). However, principals must have specific skills as instructional leaders (Fullan,

2010a). The current reality is that many districts are having difficulty filling principal

vacancies (Maxwell, 2009; Sunderman, Orfield, & Kim, 2006; Viadero, 2009), and

current principals often do not have the skills to meet the new demands (Helsing,

Howell, Kegan, & Lahey, 2008). Recent data suggests that only half of beginning

principals are still in the positions five years later (Viadero). As the role has shifted

(Bossi, 2007), some educators increasingly view the principalship as more challenging

and less desirable than the job is worth (Lyons & Algozzine, 2006; Pounder & Crow,

2005; Tucker & Codding, 2002). Researchers also implied that while *NCLB* focused

heavily on teacher quality, silence on the role of principals resulted in failure to provide

principals with adequate support (Sunderman et al., 2006). Districts have been forced

to hire principals with little or no experience, and the result has been high turnover rates

and, even worse, too many schools not receiving the leadership they need in attaining

increased student achievement (Connelly & Tirozzi, 2008).

While some researchers hail site-based management as the answer for improved

schools (Arterbury, 1991; David, 1996; Finn, 1991), others claim this change has led to

low morale among teachers and staff (Myers & Goldstein, 1997). To compound the

problem, teachers are leaving the profession altogether or transferring from high needs

schools to more affluent schools as a result of the new accountability demands and the

problems faced in schools serving mainly economically disadvantaged and minority

students (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005;

Shakrani, 2008). Teacher attrition is costing billions at a time when districts are seeing

major decreases in budgets, and students with the greatest need are too often left with

the less knowledgeable and experienced teachers (Shakrani).

Despite the optimism once associated with the *Restructuring Movement* and the

Standards Movement (Dufour & Eaker, 1998), education has yet seen any significant

changes in teacher practices and student achievement (Bauer & Bogotch, 2006; Beck &

Murphy, 1998; Cuban, 2008; Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Elmore, 1995; Levey & Acker-

Hocevar, 1998; Murphy & Beck, 1995; Odden, 1995), leading some researchers to

declare that leaving schools on their own to resolve school improvement issues does

not work (Dufour, 2007). While site-based teams often admit struggling with issues that

have little impact on student achievement, *NCLB* is a constant reminder of the high

stakes for failing to increase student achievement (Bauer & Bogotch). Even though

site-based management has been linked to positive changes in satisfaction data among

teachers (Walker, 2004). Holloway (2000) reminded educators that satisfaction is not the same as productivity.

While there will continue to be individual schools that can be successful on their own, school districts clearly recognize that ensuring all students have comparable educational experiences will require much more than relying on a one school at a time approach (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Leverett, 2004). The compelling evidence that administrators and school staffs cannot meet these mandates in isolation combined with the reality that accountability is here to stay, have prompted some districts to take a more active role (Corcoran, Fuhrman, & Belcher, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender; Dufour, 2007; Guskey, 2007; Honig & Copland, 2008; Protheroe, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008). The results have yielded positive gains, which has prompted increased awareness of the critical role of the central office in increasing the capacity of all schools (Leverett).

<div align="center">Emerging Research</div>

While the district's role in improving teaching and learning may have been overlooked throughout the history of education (Chrispeels et al., 2008; Cunningham, 1963; Pajak, 1989; Pajak & Glickman, 1989; Rorrer et al., 2008; Wimpelberg, 1987), Supovitz (2006) argues there is reason for optimism as the twenty-first century unfolds. Research increasingly shows that gains in student achievement are possible when schools and districts work together to implement change (Chrispeels et al.). Honig and Copland (2008) describe how districts across the nation have begun to seek methods to reinvent themselves as they respond to the mandate of increased achievement for all students.

As districts are beginning to get results through district-led efforts that change the relationship between the central office and the school (Fullan & Levin, 2009; Honig & Copland, 2008), researchers and educators are now posing questions as to what the relationship looks like (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008). A review of the research clearly reveals distinct functions and roles of the central office that are essential for improving achievement for all students. For this research, these functions and roles were grouped under common themes. As a result, seven major thematic functions defining the role of the central office in reforming districts emerged (see Figure 3: Analysis of thematic domains within the theoretical framework). While the functions are presented separately in this research for clarity, there is considerable overlap, which is a reflection of the research. This result supports the notion that there are no single-factor solutions and the central office in effective districts performs a combination of different functions rather than any one function in isolation (English, 2009; Fullan & Levin, 2009; Snipes et al., 2002).

As with previous eras in supervision, defining characteristics also emerged. Coherence and alignment were consistently mentioned as critical to the success of the district (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Chrispeels et al., 2008; English, 2009; Leverett, 2004; Madda et al., 2007; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Orr, Berg, Shore, & Meier, 2008; Thornton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007). Michael Fullan (2009) summarized by stating:

It (supervision) also requires coherence among all elements of the system, including curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention practice. Each element that affects school and classroom improvement must be integrated into

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Systemic Focus	Commitment to Instruction	Use of Data To Drive Decisions	Investment in Professional Development	Leadership Development	Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources	Identification of Intervention Strategies
➤ Develop a Shared Vision	➤ Ensure Alignment and a Clear Focus	➤ Collect and Analyze Data	➤ Ensure High Quality Professional Development	➤ Encourage Distributed Leadership	➤ Ensure Equitable, Efficient, and Transparent Distribution of Resources	➤ Support Multi-tiered Intervention
➤ Develop Trust Among Stakeholders	➤ Identify Research Based Programs and Practices	➤ Develop Formative Assessments and Benchmarking	➤ Provide Professional Development Focused on Instruction	➤ Ensure Strong Instructional Leadership from Administrators	➤ Assist Schools in Understanding Finances	➤ Provide Professional Development Related to Intervention Strategies
➤ Become Keeper of the Vision	➤ Coordinate Instructional Materials	➤ Utilize Program Evaluation	➤ Provide Professional Development for Role-Alike Groups	➤ Work with Institutes of Higher Education	➤ Seek Alternative Revenues	
➤ Develop a Multi-year Plan			➤ Provide Professional Development for Central Office	➤ Offer Advancement Opportunities		
➤ Ensure an Equity Agenda			➤ Maintain Support for New Employees			
➤ Implement a Cycle of Continuous Improvement			➤ Establish Structures for Learning Communities			
➤ Serve as brokers						
➤ Become a Service Provider						
➤ Balance School Autonomy with Central Office Responsibility						

Figure 3. Analysis of thematic domains within the theoretical framework.

a seamless whole. The alignment and cohesion produces collective efficacy and

results across the entire district (p. 48).

The functions of the central office as identified from the research, combined with

defining characteristics, provide supporting evidence of the critical role of the central

office. Descriptions for each of the seven thematic domains are provided below,

including additional descriptions and details (see Figure 3).

S*ystemic Focus*

The research cautioned that without a systemic focus, organizations run the risk

of individual interpretation and personal agendas, which increases the chance of any

reform failing to improve student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom,

2004; 7 actions that improve school district performance. Newsletter, 2006; Thornton et

al., 2007). This approach should include all schools and all parts of the district, from the

school board to business operations as well as external unions (Mclaughlin & Talbert,

2003). Leverett (2004) captured the intent of this function when he stated: "Silos of

independent, segmented decision-making that spin schools in many directions must be

replaced with integrated efforts across the central office to reduce opportunities for

messages that are incongruent with the system-wide instructional focus" (p. 4).

McLaughlin and Talbert (2003) provide an example from the East Bay Unified School

District where all central office administrators meet twice a week to discuss issues and

problems within the school (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003).

Develop a shared vision. District reform cannot be random, thus improvement

efforts start with a vision (McBeath, 2006; 7 actions that improve school district

performance. Newsletter, 2006). In 1990, Senge defined vision as the "capacity to hold

a shared picture of the future we seek to create" (p. 9). Researchers and experts have found that a shared vision around learning and teaching with a few well-defined goals reflecting concrete actions made systemic alignment a reality by building consensus and creating a sense of urgency from the boardroom to the classroom (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Chrispeels et al., 2008; McBeath; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Protheroe, 2008; Snipes et al., 2002; 7 actions that improve school district performance. Newsletter). In a case study of three districts conducted by Snipes et al., a shared vision among the schools, the superintendent, the board, and community leaders contributed to documented gains in student achievement and a narrowing of the achievement gap. Leaders in all three districts reported that a shared vision set the stage by creating the necessary conditions for change.

A shared vision has been seen as a departure from the culture usually found in school districts. With a common vision, school-based staffs viewed the school in the broader context of federal, state, and local mandates and specialized central office staff gave up their own agendas and routines for district goals (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; McNeal & Oxholm, 2009; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009; Snipes et al., 2002). The result of creating a shared vision increased awareness of the issues and problems that existed, often resulting in a new way of thinking, while a lack of vision clearly became evident in results (Chafin, 2005).

Maintain communication with stakeholders. Districts that have made significant gains in student achievement have developed a shared vision through open, routine, and systematic communication with stakeholders. Communication first starts with the

courage to share results, followed by the willingness to seek solutions through collaborative relationships (Togneri & Anderson, 2008; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Develop trust among stakeholders. Researchers have also found that a systemic focus and open communication created a new level of trust, commitment, and ownership for district results from all stakeholders (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Foley & Sigler, 2009; Fullan & Levin, 2009; Silverman, 2004). In a study completed by Chhuon, Gilkey, Gonzalez, Daly, and Chrispeels (2006), trust was enhanced by greater transparency in decision-making which included expanding conversations related to critical district issues to individuals beyond the superintendent's administrative team.

Become keeper of the vision. Assuming the role of "keeper of the vision" became essential for the central office in reforming districts (MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008). The specific function for the central office included removing distractions and competing programs that prevented staff from maintaining a clear focus (Appelbaum, 2002; Burch & Spillane, 2004; Corcoran et al., 2001; Honig & Copland, 2008). In a study conducted by Corcoran et al., reluctance to remove previous practices and ineffective programs was shown to impede the progress of the entire district. This barrier was further referred to as: "…a focus on the goodness of the option rather than on its effects" (p. 8). Through interviews conducted with principals and teachers, school staffs acknowledged the importance of assistance from the central office in reducing distractions and barriers. School staff also reported appreciation for the feedback from the central office in identifying ineffective programs that diluted the vision and consumed valuable resources.

Develop a multi-year plan. The central office should assist schools and the community in making a commitment to a multi-year plan (Chrispeels et al., 2008; Hannay, Manning, Earl, & Blair, 2006; Leverett, 2004; Murphy & Hallinger, 2001; Togneri & Anderson, 2003a). Successful districts "recognized there are no quick fixes" (Togneri & Anderson, 2003b, p. 13). A long-term plan became even more critical in large, urban districts, particularly those districts with the highest concentration of poverty (Boyd & Christman, 2003; Stover, 2008). Sharratt and Fullan (2009) applied this concept to the San Diego Unified School District, which was one of the most closely watched initiatives in the history of urban school reform. While this study identified several possible components that emerged from this initiative, the findings also showed that the San Diego strategy failed partly because the pace of change was too fast. The leaders of the district did not allow enough time for building relationships and capacity among teachers and principals. District reform has been shown to require from three to six years in order to obtain desired results (Stover).

McNeal and Oxholm (2009) further supported this suggestion and linked a multi-year commitment to the success of *stretch goals. Stretch goals* were defined by high standards in which all employees and stakeholders understood it was no longer "business as usual" (p. 65). Stretch goals required time for building consensus as well as time for implementation. The central office played a significant role in leading the charge; however, Stover (2008) also noted the important role of the Board. Not only must the Board support the multi-year plan, but it must maintain stable leadership to the extent possible.

Ensure an equity agenda. Researchers and experts identified an equity agenda driven by the central office as critical to reforming districts. Districts that have made progress have maintained a clear focus on providing all students with an excellent education (Chrispeels et al., 2008; Copland, 2003; Downey, Steffy, Poston & English, 2009; Foley & Sigler, 2009; Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Honig & Copland, 2008; Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, 2003; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Rorrer et al., 2008; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Leithwood et al. (2004) referred to this component as *leading for social justice*, ensuring a quality education for students who have been traditionally underserved by districts and schools. The central office had a major responsibility for assisting the district in owning past inequities and removing barriers that hindered a focus on equity (Harris & Chrispeels).

Following a study conducted by Togneri and Anderson (2003a), findings revealed the importance of acknowledging low achievement, particularly for poor and minority children: "The courage to acknowledge negative information was critical to building the will to change" (p. 5). McNeal and Oxholm (2009) later defined courage as "the willingness to do the right thing even though it may be more popular or politically expedient to do otherwise" (p. xii).

Implement a cycle of continuous improvement. In order to realize the vision and goals, the central office must assist in identifying a district-wide cycle of continuous improvement or a change model (Brown & Spangler, 2006; Copland, 2003; Foley & Sigler, 2009; Guskey, 2007; Knapp et al., 2003; Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Thornton et al., 2007). Murphy and Meyers referred to this process as the *performance loop;* Copland referred to the process as the *cycle of inquiry*; Honig (2004) referred to the

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process as *organizational learning;* and Knapp et al. referred to the process as *systems learning.* The purpose of this process was to promote strategic planning within the schools and the district, which allowed the districts to monitor progress and make adjustments when critical variables changed or when strategies were not achieving the desired results (Copland; McNeal & Oxholm).

Wake County Public School System, located in North Carolina, is an example of a large urban district that has embraced the process of aligning strategic planning throughout the district (D. Burns, personal communication, November 21, 2009). Five years ago, the district undertook the process of identifying a strategic model of continuous improvement for the schools which included aligning school improvement plans with local, state, and national goals with a focus on the needs of the schools. During the last year, the process has been expanded to the six divisions within central services with the goal of aligning division plans with local, state, and national goals as well as school plans. Once the division plans were completed, the process was passed to departments within each division, and in turn, department plans followed. Department plans were then translated to individual performance plans. The result has been greater alignment, increased understanding of the relationship to student achievement from all departments including finance and auxiliary services, and an increased focus on student achievement at all levels of the organization (D. Burns, personal communication, November 21, 2009).

Serve as brokers. The central office has the responsibility of cultivating the exchange of information within and across the district, including working between the top of the system and assisting in reform inside the schools (Appelbaum, 2002; Burch &

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Spillane, 2004; Corcoran et al., 2001; Honig & Copland, 2008; Supovitz, 2008). Burch

and Spillane referred to this role of the central office as *brokers.* This role includes

increasing Board members' understanding of policy needs as well as assisting

principals and teachers in acting on district reform policies (Supovitz, 2008). This

support is not limited to conveying information among internal stakeholders but is

extended to external stakeholders as well. For example, subject matter networks such

as the National Writing Project work with districts to increase the focus on literacy

(Lieberman & Wood, 2003). These organizations have played an important role in

improvement efforts; however, a major responsibility becomes monitoring, coordinating,

communicating with, and evaluating external service providers to ensure alignment with

district efforts (Appelbaum; Burch & Spillane; Corcoran et al., 2008; Honig, 2004; Honig

& Copland, 2008).

   Become a service provider. In order to support a systemic focus, the central

office must provide a wide range of support. MacIver (2004) described this role as

service provider and Supovitz (2008) described the role as *coherer of programs and*

resources. This role included a broad range of support responsibilities ranging from

managing, coordinating, and integrating services, to providing expertise in the selection

of instructional programs and strategies (Supovitz, 2008). Supovitz (2008) listed

technology, alignment of textbook selections and drop-out prevention as just a few

examples. Muirhead, Tyler, and Hamilton (2001) included the example of a district-wide

security plan. Foley and Sigler (2009) included ensuring clean and well-maintained

facilities that allow for productive learning environments. While the role can be very

daunting, particularly with other managerial and political responsibilities, Supovitz

(2008) stated that this central office role was necessary for improving teaching and learning.

   Balance school autonomy with central office responsibility. Murphy and Hallinger (2001) found that there was a substantial amount of central office direction in effective districts. In addition, there was consistency between schools in the districts. Districts had tight control where decisions were made and how outcomes were inspected. Greater autonomy for the school was evident in the input and implementation stages of the decision process.

   While the research supports an instructional focus driven by the central office, an appropriate infrastructure did not mean a lockstep teacher-proof curriculum (Foley & Sigler, 2009; Thornton et al., 2007; Waters & Marzano, 2006). The central office was responsible for establishing district-wide instructional goals and standards and supporting the schools in meeting these standards, while school staffs had responsibility for determining school specific learning and teaching goals (Foley & Sigler; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002). Effective school districts have found a balance between the schools' autonomy and the central office's responsibility, which usually meant empowering schools to customize as needed within a district framework (Appelbaum, 2002; Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Olson, 2007).

Commitment to Instruction

   "Promising school improvement initiatives require district central offices to play unprecedented, integral leadership roles in strengthening student learning district-wide" (Honig & Copland, 2008, p. 3). Researchers and experts overwhelmingly identified a system-wide infrastructure to support instruction as a key component in effective

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districts (Chhuon et al., 2006; English, 2009; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002; Protheroe, 2008). In a study of twelve effective districts, Murphy and Hallinger (2001) found that student learning was the top priority. Excuses as to why high levels of student achievement could not be attained were absent from the culture.

Ensure alignment and a clear focus. Effective districts developed an infrastructure to support instruction, which aligned with state standards, district standards, assessments, and student objectives (Applelbaum, 2002; Downey, 2001; English, 2009). Shannon and Bylsma (2004) stated that districts improve with: "a centralized and coordinated approach to curriculum, which is adopted district-wide" (p. 25). This alignment extended to each grade level and each course. English (2009) refers to this process as alignment between the written, tested, and taught curriculum. Alignment of the district, state, and federal standards was supported in a study by Sawchuk (2008). Teachers were shown to base a majority of their instruction on state standards, furthering the need for alignment.

Downey (2001) noted that most districts had far too many objectives to be taught in the available time for the typical learner. Schools perform better with a clear focus; however this is particularly true of low-performing schools. The central office in effective districts designed a feasible number of objectives to be taught in the time allotted. This guidance assisted teachers by developing a clear understanding of what should be taught and what would be tested (7 actions that improve school district performance. Newsletter, 2006), as well as assisting teachers in pacing their instruction so that students would reasonably master most objectives (Brown & Spangler, 2006; Chrispeels et al., 2008; Downey, 2001; Honig & Copland; 2008).

Identify research based programs and practices. Effective districts assisted schools in identifying programs, strategies, and instructional practices supported by research. This information helped schools understand what high quality instruction looks like (Supovitz, 2006). Often, school-based personnel do not have the time nor the expertise required for this type of research. Identifying effective programs from the central office made it easier for teachers and principals to learn about new programs (Fullan & Levin, 2009; Togneri & Anderson, 2003b).

Danielson, Doolittle, and Bradley (2007) explained that this component was more than just identifying effective instructional programs. Staffs should also be provided with professional development in the use of new programs, and the central office should work with schools to ensure that practices were implemented with fidelity. Reeves (2008) completed a study which reinforced the need to implement new approaches with fidelity. In this study, findings showed that when 90% or more of the teachers implemented the same effective strategies, the percentage of students who scored proficient levels increased. Fullan (2009) related this effect to the Wallace findings in which the degree of *collective efficacy* resulted in increases in student achievement across the district.

Coordinate instructional materials. As with identifying effective strategies, school staffs do not always have the time or expertise to identify and align instructional materials with the curriculum. The reforming districts assisted in the selection and deep alignment of instructional materials, including textbooks, to district objectives and assessments as well as state assessments (Downey, 2001; English, 2009; Supovitz, 2006).

Use of Data to Drive Decisions

Having a clear picture of the district based on data can be a highly effective tool to guide instruction (Kerr, Marsh, Darilek, & Barney, 2006; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004). In a study conducted over a four-year period by McLaughlin and Talbert (2003), teachers reported increased utilization of data as critical to evaluating instruction, establishing school and district norms for problem-solving, and building learning communities focused on improving instruction. McLaughlin and Talbert (2003) cautioned that without evidence teachers and administrators cannot be expected to effectively analyze factors such as curriculum choice, resource allocation, and strategies for change.

Collect and analyze data. As the collection and disaggregation of student performance data has become more prevalent in the schools, districts have taken the role of organizing data so that decision-makers have timely access to data in a user-friendly format (Bottoms & Frye, 2009; Burch & Spillane, 2004; Copland, 2003; Foley & Sigler, 2009; Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Knapp et al., 2003; Supovitz, 2008). Burch and Spillane used the term *data managers* when referring to this responsibility. In a study conducted by Kerr et al. (2006) and a separate study by Supovitz (2008), findings demonstrated that schools generally did not have access to effective data nor the technical ability to coordinate available data. On the other hand, in a separate study conducted by Chrispeels et al. (2008) teachers experienced data overload due to lack of support in identifying critical data.

Develop formative assessments and benchmarking. In addition to merely maintaining summative data, effective districts seek additional methods to determine

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adequate progress (English, 2009; Foley & Sigler, 2009; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; McNeal & Oxholm, 2009). English (2009) emphasized the necessity of criterion referenced pre- and post- tests, deeply aligned with the curriculum and summative assessments. In addition, McNeal and Oxholm (2009) suggested that districts utilize benchmarking data for formal and informal assessment between schools and with similar districts. Both forms of data can assist teachers, principals, and central office staff in identifying and determining measurable targets, proactively responding to state and federal accountability programs, and monitoring outcomes of students, schools, and district personnel as well as indicators that impact those outcomes (Foley & Sigler; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003).

Utilize program evaluation. Improving districts have also supported schools by providing program evaluations (Corcoran et al., 2001; Honig & Copland, 2008). Program evaluations have become the analytical process to document a program's data-based merit (Scriven, 1991; Thornton et al., 2007). These evaluations serve the purpose of determining the impact on achievement (Thornton et al.) and in identifying effective programs that could be replicated (Corcoran et al.).

In a study conducted by Corcoran et al. (2001), districts struggled in this area and reported that the shift to evidence-based practices proved to be difficult. In the three districts included in the study, philosophical commitments and political necessities sometimes prevailed over the data. Findings revealed that program evaluations were too often pushed aside by "whims, fads, opportunism, and ideology" (p. 80). In order to improve instruction, districts should make decisions based on evidence, not instinct. Other researchers agreed and found that successful districts gathered data on multiple

issues, based on a multi-measure accountability system (7 actions that improve school district performance. Newsletter, 2006; Thornton et al., 2007; Togneri & Anderson, 2003b).

Investment in Professional Development

In 1994, Todnem and Warner stated that if, "the individuals within the organization do not have opportunities to learn how to work within the new system, the improvement effort will fail" (p. 66). Effective districts have taken steps to ensure system-wide professional development focused on building the capacity of teachers and principals to improve teaching and learning. Professional development should be on-going, job-embedded, and aligned with identified needs and targeted goals (Chrispeels et al., 2008; English, 2009; Leverett, 2004; McBeath, 2006; Protheroe, 2008; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Supovitz, 2008; Vandiver, 2008). The central office plays a critical role in determining the context as well as providing the professional development (Spillane & Thompson, 1997).

Ensure high quality professional development. Researchers have shown that while educators approved of differentiated instruction for students, failure to apply this concept to adults is a common occurrence. Togneri and Anderson (2003b) argued that successful districts replace all traditional, one-way workshops with new approaches. In order to ensure that the professional development meets the needs of the teachers and principals, delivery methods should be in varying forms that are coherent and organized while addressing different levels and needs in a setting that promotes sharing (Chafin, 2005; Foley & Sigler, 2009).

Provide professional development focused on instruction. Effective districts ensure that school-based staff received professional development in use of the curriculum, and the selections of activities align with the curriculum and support the needs of the students served (Downey, 2001; Marsh, Kerr, Ikemoto, Darilek, Suttorp, Zimmer, & Barney, 2005; McBeath, 2006). This training should include developing an understanding of the district assessments, use of data, intervention strategies as well as content priorities such as literacy, numeracy, and high school reform (Danielson et al., 2007; Downey, 2001; Fullan & Levin, 2009).

Provide professional development for role-alike groups. Opportunities for district supported professional development should not only be made available to teachers and principals but also other role-alike groups such as coaches, mentors and specialists (Leverett, 2004). These opportunities can take many forms from formal professional development to providing opportunities for study groups. Including different groups that impact instruction builds strength across the district of the knowledge and skills required to support an instructional focus.

Provide professional development for central office. "The instructional focus must become everyone's work at all levels of the district" (Leverett, 2004, p. 4). Findings have shown that effective districts not only invested in professional development for school-based staff but central office staff as well (Honig & Copland, 2008). If central offices are going to work in collaboration with the schools and be viewed as key reform participants, they must learn to support schools more effectively and deepen knowledge about teaching and learning (Honig & Copland; Leverett; Silverman, 2004).

Maintain support for new employees. Research found that districts with increases in achievement implemented multiple strategies to assist new employees (Togneri & Anderson, 2003b). While formal and informal mentoring programs provide job embedded training, focused professional development also plays a significant role in assisting new employees in understanding district expectations as well as effective use of strategies adopted by the district (Grogan & Crow, 2004; Peters, 2009; Togneri & Anderson, 2003b).

Peters (2009) stated that: "district leadership has a tremendous responsibility for providing support for the school leader" (p. 71). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) stated: "Helping beginning teachers learn to think systematically about this complexity (teaching) is extremely important" (p. 118). While the district has a responsibility to all employees, preparing teachers and principals to lead in the classroom and the school is extremely critical.

Establish structures for learning communities. Effective districts set up structures and support schedule changes that allow employees to work as colleagues in learning communities (Knapp et al., 2003; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002; Protheroe, 2008). Time spent in conversations related to the district vision allowed staffs time to plan and share strategies for making the vision a reality.

Opportunities to work in learning communities were critical for central offices as well as the schools (Hightower, Knapp, Marsh, & McLaughlin, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002; McNeal & Oxholm, 2009). In a study conducted by Honig (2008), this concept was taken a step further and methods to engage the central office as learning organizations were explored. While this research recognized that this task would be

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difficult, partly as a result of previous roles of the central office, recognition of the importance for central office staff in becoming a learning organization through partnerships with the schools was deemed necessary for improving student achievement.

Fullan (2010c) applied this concept to the entire district. This research reinforces that there are no silos of standards, personnel, curriculum and development, etc. Everyone has the same access to information, and everyone is a part of the solution. Schools learn from each other. Fullan coined this level of collaboration as *lateral capacity building* and stated that it was one of the most powerful tools available to the district (p. 12).

Leadership Development

"When people in an organization focus only on their position, they have little sense of responsibility for the results produced when all positions interact" (Senge, 1990, p. 19). Effective districts developed strategies to redefine leadership development so that all members felt a sense of ownership for the results (Fullan, 2009; Fullan & Levin, 2009; Rorrer et al., 2008; Togneri & Anderson, 2003b).

Encourage distributed leadership. Effective leadership that supports instruction must be distributed among a variety of stakeholders (Togneri & Anderson, 2003a). Distributed leadership or shared leadership must assist in setting high expectations for both students and staff (7 actions that improve school district performance. Newsletter, 2006); however, Fullan and Levin (2009) observed that this cannot be accomplished by maintaining a separate set of standards from the content areas. In addition, leadership skills must be embedded in the work. Job-embedded leadership development will carry

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over into other priorities and will focus on improving capacity to implement reform (Brown & Spangler, 2006; Fullan, 2009; Rorrer et al., 2008).

Distributed expertise or leadership reinforces reciprocal accountability among staffs (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Dr. Del Burns, Former Superintendent of Wake County Public School System, advocated that leadership development was important and that all staffs must learn to lead from where they sit (D. Burns, personal communication, June 3, 2009).

Ensure strong instructional leadership from administrators. Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, Michlin, Gordon, Meath, and Anderson (2009) found that leadership development was the most powerful source of influence over the schools. This report captured the findings of current research and revealed that reforming districts paid attention to leadership by advancing the skills of district and school leaders in leading a common goal of improving student achievement (Brown & Spangler, 2006; Fullan & Levin, 2009; Helsing et al., 2008; Marsh et al., 2005; McBeath, 2006; McNeal & Oxholm, 2009).

Reforming districts firmly placed the principal as the instructional leader, promoting appropriate administrative behaviors that foster shared leadership at all levels (Brown & Spangler, 2006; Fullan & Levin, 2009; Krajewski, 1984; Marsh et al., 2005). In a study of five districts conducted by Brown and Spangler, leadership development for the principal was accomplished in a number of ways. In addition to consistent, on-going training, content experts or coaches engaged principals in learning to increase their knowledge of instruction in areas such as content and testing data. Principals were expected to know what good teaching looked like and to assist in

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leading professional development at their schools. A strong component of such processes usually included regular classroom visits to assist with implementation of key strategies (Brown & Spangler; Leverett, 2004).

Fullan (2009) examined leadership in eight programs and found the following components to be critical: (1) recruitment of outstanding leaders into programs focused on instruction and change, (2) curriculum theory linked to practice, (3) coursework that included field-based experiences, (4) a blending of coaching that supported the analytic work and assisted in clarifying a basis for practice, (5) creation of cohorts that know how to collaborate, and (6) procurement of necessary resources (p. 46).

Murphy and Hallinger (2001) focused on the importance of the superintendent playing an active role in areas of curriculum and instruction. The areas that this research identified as critical for the superintendent included setting district goals, selecting district-wide staff development, ensuring district and school goal coordination, and supervising and evaluating principals. MacIver and Farley-Ripple (2008) agreed with this study and added that the superintendent must also develop the expertise of the administrative staff in supporting curriculum and instruction along with other areas of district focus.

Provide leaders with the knowledge to become change savvy. Leaders in today's schools and school districts must be knowledgeable of the change process. Fullan (2010b) describes how successful organizations are led by individuals who understand the importance of *careful entry, listening, and engaging in fact finding and joint problem solving* (p. 18).

Work with institutions of higher education. In a study conducted by Honig and Copland (2008), one of the methods in which central office staff looked for improved methods to provide professional development was to partner with institutions of higher education. McNeal and Oxholm (2009) suggested that this strategy should not only be used for on-going professional development but for promoting additional degreed programs as well. As a result, the district would have a better pipeline of quality school leaders trained to reflect the needs of the district.

Offer advancement opportunities. Many districts used some form of competitive compensation and a variety of incentives for meeting goals. This strategy included establishing a career track for teachers that offered advancement for the most effective individuals (Foley & Sigler, 2009; Protheroe, 2008). Merit pay programs are increasingly seen across the nation as districts explore options. One such example is seen in an urban district in North Carolina, where the Board and administrators are experimenting with the Teacher and Student Advancement Program (TAP). The most effective teachers are also offered advancement opportunities as a master and/or mentor teacher (Hui, 2009). Programs such as this one offer teacher bonuses and salary increases based on improvements in student achievement.

Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources

Districts must prioritize their resources to align with and drive the district goals (Fullan & Levin, 2009; Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Knapp et al., 2003; Togneri & Anderson, 2003b). Fullan and Levin (2009) described how too often districts and schools respond as if new programs and activities require new money when the reality is that existing resources need to be utilized in a more effective manner. Fullan and

Levin further recommend abandoning ad hoc programs created to satisfy an individual for expenditures that support the needs of the district.

Ensure equitable, efficient, and transparent distribution of resources. "To align the infrastructure with the strategic vision, district leaders ensure the equitable, efficient, and transparent distribution of public and private resources" (Foley & Sigler, 2009, p. 5). In case studies conducted by Snipes et al. (2002), districts involved in successful reform efforts focused resources in schools with the greatest need. These resources included financial and human resources as well as human capital. Human capital was defined as capacity-building among teachers and principals (MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; Snipes et al.).

As with a business, educational leaders must get the greatest value on the dollar, which means increased efficiency measures to reduce and contain costs (McNeal & Oxholm, 2009; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Not only does this mean ensuring appropriate measures, but educational leaders must also find methods to make the budgets accessible and understandable for ensuring consumers that they received the best value for their dollar.

Assist schools in understanding finances. The district has a critical role in assisting schools in understanding how to prioritize and align resources with the goals of the system (Appelbaum, 2002; Honig, 2004; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008). The ability of the district to reach ambitious goals is largely dependent on understanding how to capitalize on resources. This information not only empowered staffs to make better decisions but allowed them to fully understand budget implications (Appelbaum).

Seek alternative revenues. Districts have a responsibility to seek alternative resources that flow to the schools to support instruction (Fullan, 2009; McNeal & Oxholm, 2009; Muirhead et al., 2001). McNeal and Oxholm described one district's use of an exclusive distribution contract to increase revenue, while Muirhead et al. described the district's responsibility to actively seek grants. Effective districts have taken time to explore the possibilities, which often includes hiring individuals from the business community to partner with business leaders to identify alternative sources of revenue in smaller districts (McNeal & Oxholm).

Identification of Intervention Strategies

A major component in reforming districts was attention to intervention strategies. Intervention strategies were identified that used *NCLB* benchmarks for decision-making (Fullan, 2009; Louis et al., 2009; Muirhead et al., 2001; Protheroe, 2008).

Support m*ulti-tiered intervention.* Fullan (2009) found that effective districts "establish a focused, mostly non-punitive, comprehensive, relentless intervention strategy" (p. 48). This work supported the earlier work of Louis et al. (2009), which emphasized multi-tiered intervention services as critical for prevention and differentiating instruction.

Chafin (2005) expanded this component and suggested that acceleration should also be included. In this newsletter, a publication from the *Center of Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement*, at-risk students were reported as often being placed in programs focused on practice and drill, and accelerated students were provided more interactive, "learning for learning's sake" courses. Chafin further suggested a better balance, citing accelerated students as often the students that need skills related to how

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to complete homework and at-risk students need courses that will demonstrate that education can be fun. Muirhead et al. (2001) included an additional component for reforming districts to consider which included alternative programs for high school and middle school students who simply cannot succeed in the traditional learning environment.

*Provide p*rofessional development related to intervention strategies.* Once research based intervention strategies are identified, teachers and administrators must be provided with professional development in the use of the strategies (Danielson et al., 2007; Fullan, 2009). In addition, it is critical that systems are in place to support schools throughout the implementation phase as well as in sustaining results.

<center>Summary</center>

Throughout the history of education, identifiable shifts have occurred resulting in changes in education (Sergiovanni, 1982).   These shifts were greatly influenced by societal events (see Figure 2). Since 1990, education has experienced two additional movements, which still impact education today (Protheroe, 2008). As of yet, these movements have not produced the desired results. Evidence can be found in student achievement since the enactment of *NCLB*, which shows that results have either remained the same or declined (Bracey, 2009; Cavanagh, 2009b; Duffet et al., 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

District leaders are recognizing that the consequences are too great to ignore and are accepting the compelling evidence that schools need assistance in meeting the mandates. Redefining the relationship between the central office and the school will not be easy as districts overcome the negative images of the central office supervisor well

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engrained in the history of education (Hatch, 2009; Honig & Copland, 2008; Leverett, 2004). This change will require districts to shed the fear of being perceived as top-down leaders and move away from loosely defined site-based management, as well as the ill-defined curriculum that emerged during the restructuring movement (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Dufour, 2007; Guskey, 2007; Honig & Copland, 2008; Protheroe, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008; Waters & Marzano, 2006). District leaders will be required to establish responsibilities and parameters of authority for the central office as well as the school (Larson, 2007; Protheroe; Waters & Marzano). Waters and Marzano referred to this relationship as *defined autonomy* (p. 4). Collins (2001) referred to this concept as *a culture of discipline within an ethic of entrepreneurship* (p. 126). Waterman (1988) described this concept as *directed empowerment* (p. 63), and Dufour (2007) referred to the relationship as *loose-tight leadership* (p. 2). This relationship is one in which schools and the central office operate under non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction with clearly defined areas of autonomy (Waters & Marzano, p. 4).

Research to define the actual functions of the central office in improving student achievement will be critical in overcoming the negative images of the supervisor held in the past (Fullan, 1991; Harris & Chrispeels, 2008; Honig & Copland, 2008; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; Pajak et al., 1998). This research attempted to draw upon the emerging research and identify the functions of the central office targeted as critical to improving student achievement (see Figure 2). In addition, defining characteristics emerged, similar to other eras throughout history. These characteristics included coherence and alignment (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Chrispeels et al., 2008; English, 2009;

Fullan, 2009; Leverett, 2004; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Orr et al., 2008; Thornton et al., 2007).

Even though practice has outpaced the research, the emerging research is already warning that improvements will fail to reach to the majority of our schools without substantial involvement from the central office (Chrispeels et al., 2008; Goodlad & Oakes, 1988; Hatch, 2009; Leverett, 2004; Pounder & Crow, 2005). This warning creates a sense of urgency for additional research as leaders seek information to make evidence-based decisions in an era of accountability supported by limited resources.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to increase the scope of the research on the role of the central office by exploring critical functions of the central office in improving achievement for all students. As stated in chapter 1, the first purpose of this study is to determine which district functions principals believe are essential in improving achievement for all students. Secondly, the study will examine the relationships between perceptions of principals regarding central office support for increasing student achievement in schools that met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) and schools that did not meet AYP under *NCLB.*

Statement of the Problem

While there have been successful individual attempts on the part of schools to improve student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Togneri & Anderson, 2003a), the emerging research argues that the requirements for meeting the mandates of *NCLB* are too daunting for the school administrators and teachers to be expected to attempt in isolation (Corcoran et al., 2001; Daresh, 2004; Hatch, 2009; Honig & Copland, 2008; Markward, 2008, Protheroe, 2008; Rallis & Highsmith, 1986). Schools do not always have the knowledge or expertise to address the challenges, and teachers have reported that *NCLB* alone does not provide adequate support (Hatch; Le Floch et al., 2006). In addition, the consequences of failing to improve student achievement under *NCLB* are too great for districts to ignore.

Districts are increasingly obtaining results by re-examining the relationship between the school and the central office (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Dufour, 2007; Guskey, 2007; Honig & Copland, 2008; Protheroe, 2008; Rorrer et al.,

2008); however, the research to guide these changes lags behind current initiatives (Fullan, 1991; Honig & Copland; MacIver & Farley-Ripple; Pajak et al., 1998). With the growing constraints imposed by the current economic situation as well as increased accountability associated with *NCLB*, information to assist leaders in making informed decisions is critical, making this research very timely.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

As stated in chapter 1, this study has two major research questions. These questions are listed below:

1. Which district functions do principals believe are essential in improving achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies?

2. Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP?

<div align="center">Population</div>

Setting

The study was conducted in a large urban district with a total of 159 schools serving students during the 2009-2010 school year. Included in the total number of schools are two alternative middle schools, two non-traditional high schools, and two 9th grade centers. During the 2009-2010 school year, one high school expansion was completed and three new elementary schools were opened (Wake County Public Schools District Overview 2008-09, n.d.). While student achievement has remained

consistent with approximately 63% of the schools meeting AYP in 2008-09 (North

Carolina School Report Cards, 2009), the district has undergone tremendous increases

in the size of the student population (see Table 3: Growth In Student Population).

During the last ten years, the district has experienced an average annual growth of

3.77% with the highest percentage at 5.91% and the lowest percentage at 1.36%. This

percentage translates into 7,568 students as the largest increase and 1,893 students as

the smallest increase.

Student Population

     Demographics. With the increased growth, the district has experienced shifting

demographics (see Table 4, Shifting Demographics). While the overall percentage of

White and African American students has decreased, the percentage of Asian,

Hispanic, and Multi-Racial has continued to increase.

     Special needs of students. Approximately 9.3% of the students within the district

are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and 5.1% require English as a Second

Language (ESL) services. Approximately 26% of the students in grades 4 through 12

were enrolled in Academically Gifted Programs, and approximately 13.9% of the

students were enrolled in Special Needs Programs (Wake County Public Schools

District Overview 2008-09, n.d.).

     Free/reduced lunch status. The percentage of free/reduced lunch status ranges

from 10.2% of the students qualifying for reduced or free lunch to 77.9% with an

average of approximately 28.4% (Wake County Public Schools District Overview 2008-

09).

Table 3

Growth In Student Population

School Year	Increase from Previous Year	% Increase	Total Enrollment
1987-1988	-	-	59,687
1988-1989	1245	2.05	60,932
1989-1990	1530	2.45	62,462
1990-1991	1790	2.79	64,252
1991-1992	2647	3.96	66,899
1992-1993	3153	4.51	70,052
1993-1994	3143	4.31	73,195
1994-1995	3536	4.60	76,731
1995-1996	4472	5.57	81,203
1996-1997	4298	4.92	85,411
1997-1998	4030	4.51	89,441
1998-1999	2470	2.69	91,911
1999-2000	2939	3.10	94,850
2000-2001	2733	2.81	97,583
2001-2002	3814	3.77	101,397
2002-2003	3081	2.95	104,478
2003-2004	4492	4.13	108,970
2004-2005	5098	4.47	114,068

Table 3

Growth In Student Population (continued)

School Year	Increase from Previous Year	% Increase	Total Enrollment
2005-2006	6436	5.35	120,504
2006-2007	7568	5.91	128,072
2007-2008	5930	4.30	134,002
2008-2009	3704	2.69	137,706
2009-2010	1893	1.36	139,599

Table 4

Shifting Demographics

School Year	White	African American	American Indian & Alaska Native	Hispanic	Asian & Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial
1987-1988	70.5%	26.7%	0.2%	0.5%	2.1%	0.0%
1988-1989	70.0%	27.1%	0.2%	0.6%	2.2%	0.0%
1989-1990	69.7%	27.0%	0.2%	0.7%	2.3%	0.0%
1990-1991	69.5%	27.1%	0.2%	0.8%	2.4%	0.0%
1991-1992	69.3%	27.1%	0.2%	0.9%	2.5%	0.0%
1992-1993	69.0%	27.2%	0.0%	1.1%	2.6%	0.0%
1993-1994	69.0%	27.0%	0.2%	1.3%	2.5%	0.0%
1994-1995	68.9%	26.6%	0.2%	14.6%	2.7%	0.0%
1995-1996	68.6%	26.2%	0.2%	1.9%	2.9%	0.2%
1996-1997	67.9%	26.0%	0.2%	2.2%	3.1%	0.5%
1997-1998	66.9%	26.2%	0.2%	2.7%	3.3%	0.7%

Table 4

Shifting Demographics (continued)

School Year	White	African American	American Indian & Alaska Native	Hispanic	Asian & Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial
1998-1999	66.0%	25.9%	0.3%	3.1%	3.8%	1.1%
1999-2000	64.7%	26.0%	0.3%	3.8%	3.8%	1.5%
2000-2001	63.2%	26.2%	0.3%	4.6%	3.9%	1.8%
2001-2002	61.6%	26.3%	0.3%	5.6%	4.1%	2.1%
2002-2003	60.0%	26.6%	0.3%	6.4%	4.2%	2.5%
2003-2004	58.4%	27.0%	0.3%	7.2%	4.3%	2.8%
2004-2005	56.9%	27.0%	0.3%	8.2%	4.5%	3.2%
2005-2006	55.4%	26.9%	0.3%	9.2%	4.7%	3.5%
2006-2007	53.8%	26.8%	0.3%	10.2%	5.0%	3.9%
2007-2008	52.6%	26.5%	0.3%	11.1%	5.4%	4.2%
2008-2009	51.8%	26.1%	0.3%	11.5%	5.8%	4.6%

Table 4

Shifting Demographics (continued)

School Year	White	African American	American Indian & Alaska Native	Hispanic	Asian & Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial
2009-2010	51.1%	25.9%	0.3%	11.8%	6.1%	4.8%

Qualifications of Principals

Approximately 23% of the principals have degrees beyond a master's degree. In addition, approximately 41% of the principals have 1-3 years of experience, 37% have 4-10 years experience, and 22% have 10 years or more experience (North Carolina School Report Cards, 2009).

The district is divided in to seven areas. Area Superintendents, who report to the Chief Area Superintendent, are assigned to each area. The interview process starts with meetings between the parents, staff members, and students, when appropriate, to gather input on the characteristics desired in principal candidates. Interviews are conducted by area superintendents, who make recommendations to the Superintendent. The Superintendent interviews final candidates recommended by Area Superintendents and makes the final recommendation to the Board of Education. During the last four years, the Board of Education has approved over 90 administrative appointments and/or transfers.

Organization of Central Office

The Central Office is divided into six divisions under the direction of Chief Officers. The divisions include Administrative Services, Area Superintendents, Auxiliary Services, Communications, Instructional Services, and Organizational Development and Support (See Central Services Organizational Chart). Administrative Services falls under the direction of the Chief Business Officer. There are currently seven area superintendents with one designated as the Chief Area Superintendent. Auxiliary Services is under the direction of the Chief Facilities and Operations Officer. The Chief Communications Officer has responsibility for the Communications Division. The Chief
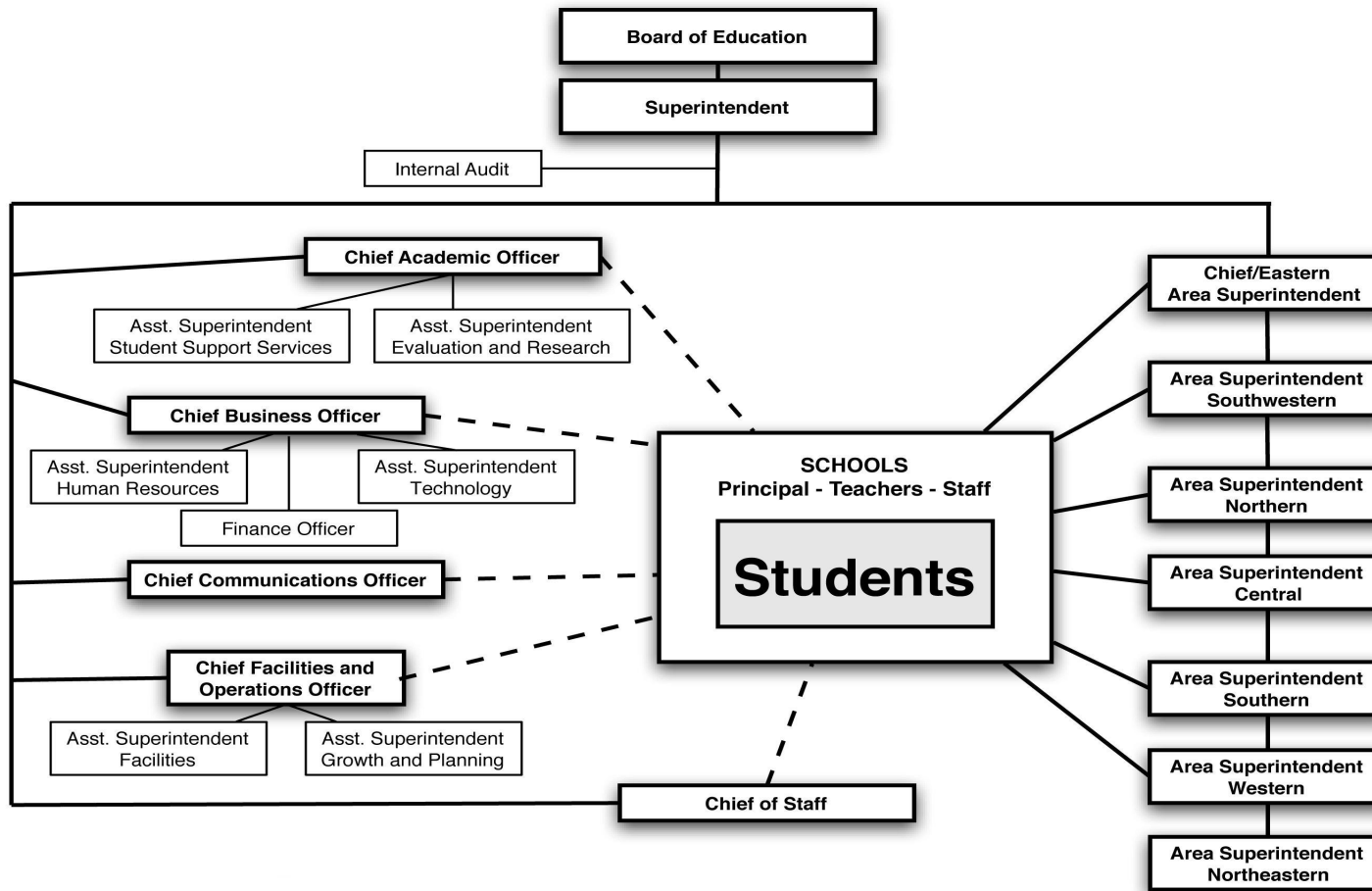
Figure 4. Central office organizational chart.

Officer for Instructional Services is responsible for instruction at all levels. The Chief of

Staff works closely with the superintendent and is responsible for Organizational

Development and Support including Board Relations, Due Process, Security,

Leadership Development, and Professional Development.

<div align="center">Design of Study</div>

Development of Survey

A synthesis of the research related to the functions of the central office essential

for improving achievement for all students was used to develop the theoretical

framework for the study. In chapter 2, under each thematic domain, a list of the

functions with a detailed description was included. The descriptions were extracted

from the research and used to develop the survey.

While every effort was made to limit the number of items included on the survey

and, thus, limit the time required for participants in completing the survey (Innovation

Network), every effort was also made to adequately include descriptions from the

research. Survey questions were grouped so that all questions related to each thematic

domain were included in the same section on the survey. This grouping allowed

participants to see descriptions of each thematic domain and allowed for an analysis of

each domain.

Even though this study primarily targeted principals, the survey described seven

functions of central office for improving achievement as identified in this synthesis of the

research (see Appendix D: Survey for Principals). Thus, the survey could be used with

other groups to determine their perceptions of the role of the central office in improving

achievement. Even though different groups of educators would be the more likely to complete this survey, unnecessary jargon was eliminated as recommended by Creswell (2005).

At the top of the survey a description of the purpose and instructions were provided. The survey consists of 55 items (see Table 5: Number of Items within Survey). The survey was formatted with a stem statement for each thematic domain. Questions/Statements were placed under stem statements and the related thematic domain. In order to understand perceptions regarding the need for each function, participants were asked whether they *agreed* or *disagreed* with each statement. At the end of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to make comments including suggestions for additions and/or deletions to the survey.

Reliability Coefficient

Creswell *(2005)* reported that, "scores on an instrument are reliable and accurate if an individual's scores are internally consistent across the items on the instrument" (p. 164). In order to determine internal consistency reliability on the survey, Cronbach's Alpha or Reliability Coefficient (Garson, 2008) was computed using SPSS for each set of questions related to the seven thematic domains within the theoretical framework. These tests allowed exploration as to whether the items on the test were consistent with one another in that they represented one, and only one dimension or area of interest (Garson, 2008; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Salkind, 2005; Santos, 1991).

Table 5

Number of Items on Survey

Thematic Domains	Systemic Focus	Commitment to Instruction	Use of Data to Drive Decision	Investment in Professional Development	Leadership Development	Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources	Identification of Intervention Strategies
Number of Questions 55 Total	16 Questions	6 Questions	11 Questions	6 Questions	6 Questions	5 Questions	5 Questions

Participants

Principals within the district were invited to participate in the survey (N=151). Surveys were mailed to each school site with an envelope for returning the survey. Principals at three schools were excluded because the schools opened during the 2009-2010 school year and did not have test results. Five schools had interim principals and were also excluded from the study.

Limitations of the Study

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This study relied heavily on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which continues to receive widespread debate, largely due to the narrow focus on test scores (Cavanagh, 2009a; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008; Lang, 2007; Guzman, 2010). All student subgroups within a school are expected to meet the target goal for percentage of students proficient. Proficiency is measured in the areas of mathematics and reading/language arts (North Carolina No Child Left Behind, n.d.).

Working conditions. Other factors within the district and the schools that typically influence working conditions such as time, atmosphere, school leadership, district leadership, facilities, resources, and teacher involvement (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009) were not taken into account for this study.

Participation in focus group. Convenience sampling was the method utilized for selecting participants in the focus group.

Selection criteria for participation in the survey. Participant selection criteria did not include distinguishing factors such as experience in teaching, previous administrative positions held in the North Carolina Public School System or any other state or longevity in their current position. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was taken

from the 2008-09 school year, which at the time of the study was the latest available data. The participants for this study were based on 2009-2010 assignments.

Testing data used. The only student achievement data that was used for this study are End-of-Grade (EOG) tests and End-of-Course (EOC) tests, used to measure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Other testing data such as Effectiveness Indexes, EVAAS and the State Growth Model were not used for selecting participants.

Relevance to other districts. The district within this study is a large population; however, this study was limited to one district. Since the narrative summative was an analysis from multiple studies, it is hoped that this study will provide insights for other districts. However, each school district has unique characteristics and serves as a reflection of the community it represents, which should be considered.

Analysis of Data

The survey has a total of 55 statements to which participants were asked to respond. These statements were categorized by seven thematic domains including: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies. The first research question stated: Which district functions do principals believe are essential in improving achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies?

To address the first question, the total number of responses, frequency of responses and percentages of responses by level of agreement were calculated for each item as well as each thematic domain. This data is presented in separate tables for each thematic domain.

A series of Fisher's exact tests were used to answer the second research question: Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP? The Fisher's exact tests were used to analyze the responses of principals (agree, disagree) for each thematic domain with the school's NCLB status (met AYP, did not meet AYP). Fisher's exact test is a statistical, nonparametric test used to analyze categorical data (Sheskin, 2007). A Fisher's exact test computes the exact probability of outcomes in a 2x2 table, thus comparing two variables, each with two categories (Salkind, 2005). Statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS 17.0 quantitative software package. Seven Fisher's exact tests were performed to examine the relationship between principals' perceptions in schools that met AYP and principals' perceptions in schools that did not meet AYP regarding the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, focus on leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies (see Table 1: Fisher's Exact Tests Examining Principals Perceptions of the District's Role in Improving Student Achievement).

<div align="center">Focus Group</div>

For this particular study, the focus group was utilized to further explore the level of consensus (see Appendix F: Focus Group Questions). A focus group interview is an

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interview with a small group of people on a specific topic (Patton, 2002). Focus groups

are widely used and accepted qualitative tools.

Due to conflicts in schedules, the time of the year in which the survey and focus

group were conducted, the difficulty in finding a time and location that served all

participants, and the conditions in the district at the time of the focus group,

convenience sampling was the method utilized for participation in the focus group. Prior

to the focus group, participants were asked to sign the *Principal's Consent Form to*

Participate in the Focus Group (see Appendix A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL LETTER). Responses for the focus groups were captured through written

notes and a recording. Responses were compared with survey results, used to further

explain the results, and used to identify areas in which additional research is needed.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

No Child Left Behind has placed unprecedented accountability on the schools for

the achievement of all students (Danielson et al., 2007; No Child Left Behind Act of

2001, 2002). The current economic situation has further complicated the situation for

district leaders (Ramquist, 2009; Reader reactions to state budget cut, 2009; UFT press

release-reaction to budget cuts, 2009). As districts scramble to reduce operating

budgets, the search for identifying areas that have the greatest effect on student

achievement is extremely critical.

While the emerging research acknowledges the important role of the central

office in improving student achievement, convincing educators and the public based on

the image of the supervisor created throughout history will be difficult without sufficient

research (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Honig & Copland, 2008; MacIver & Farley-Ripple,

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2008; Pajak, 1989). As a result, the data within this research can assist district leaders'

decision-making in determining functions of the central office that are essential for

increasing achievement for all students.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

A review of the history of the central office revealed that the central office has been overlooked as a contributor to increased student achievement (Chrispeels et al., 2008; Cunningham, 1963; Grove, 2002; Pajak, 1989; Rorrer et al., 2008; Wimpelberg, 1987); however, the emerging research suggests that the work of the central office should be part of the solution to increased achievement for all students (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Dufour, 2007; Fullan, 2010b; Guskey; Honig & Copland, 2008; Johnston, 2001; Protheroe; Rorrer, Skria, & Scheurich, 2008). As districts seek to re-examine the relationship between the school and the central office (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Dufour, 2007; Guskey, 2007; Honig & Copland, 2008; Protheroe, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008), additional research is needed to inform the process (Fullan, 1991; Honig & Copland, 2008; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; Pajak et al., 1998).

This study adds to the limited research by answering the following research questions:

1. Which district functions do principals believe are essential in improving achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies?

2. Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP?

This chapter will first describe the participants within the study, followed by the results of tests for reliability related to questions/statements within each of the seven thematic domains on the survey. The analysis of the data utilized in addressing the research questions will then be reviewed.

For the first question, the total number of responses, percentages of responses by agreement, and frequency distributions for responses were calculated for each of the 55 statements, as well as the 7 thematic domains. To answer the second research question, the results from seven Fisher's exact tests for the seven thematic domains were described (see Table 1: Fisher's Exact Tests Examining Principals' Perceptions of the District's Role in Improving Student Achievement).

<center>Description of Participants</center>

The study was conducted in a large urban district in the Southeast. During the last few years, the district has experienced rapid growth (see Table 3: Growth In Student Population) as well as changes in demographics (see Table 4: Shifting Demographics). The district opened the 2009-2010 school year with 159 schools. Three of the schools (N=3) opened during the 2009-2010 school year and, as a result, did not have test scores from the 2008-09 school year. These schools were excluded from the study. In addition, five schools (N=5) were excluded because these schools had interim principals. A total of 151 packets were mailed to principals with an invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix E: Invitation to Principals to Participate in study). Additional items included within the packet can be found in Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter, Appendix B: School District Review Board

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Approval Letter, and Appendix D: Survey for Principals. Principals also received self-addressed envelopes for returning the surveys.

During the 2008-2009 school year, 62.8% of the schools within the district in which principals were surveyed made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and 37.2% did not make AYP (see Table 6: Comparison of AYP Status for District and AYP Status for Study). Out of the possible participants (N=151), 67.5% returned surveys (N=102). Forty-one surveys or 40.2% represented schools that did not make AYP. Sixty-one returned surveys or 59.8% represented schools that made AYP (see Table 7: AYP Status of Schools Represented by Participants).

<center>Tests for Reliability</center>

Prior to analyzing the data, Cronbach's Alpha, known as the reliability coefficient (Garson, 2008), was computed for each of the seven thematic domains. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to determine whether the items on the survey within each of thematic domains were consistent in that they represented one dimension or area of interest (Garson, 2008; Salkind, 2005; Santos, 1991).

Alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1 (Santo, 1999). The generally accepted cut-off is .70 or higher for a set of items to be considered a scale (Garson, 2008; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Santos, 1991), even though some researchers are as lenient as accepting .60 (Garson, 2008). Statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS 17.0 quantitative software package.

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Table 6

Comparison of AYP Status for District and AYP Status for Study

		Percentage for District	Percentage For Study
AYP	Met	62.8%	59.8%
	Not Met	37.2%	40.2%
	TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7

AYP Status of Schools Represented by Participants

		f	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percentage
AYP	Met	61	59.8%	59.8%	59.8%
	Not Met	41	40.2%	40.2%	100.0%
		102	100.0%	100.0%	

The results of Cronbach's Alpha Test for Reliability for each of the seven thematic domains within this study ranged from .706 to .855 (see Table 8: Reliability Coefficient). Five of the domains ranged between .7 and .8, while two of the domains ranged from .8 to .9. According to Gliem and Gliem (2003), these results fall within an acceptable to good range, suggesting that items on the survey within each of the thematic domains are consistent in that they represent one dimension.

Analysis of Data

Research Question #1

The total number of responses, percentages of responses by agreement, and frequency distributions for responses to statements were calculated for each of the 55 statements, as well as the seven thematic domains. This information answered the first research question: Which district functions do principals believe are essential in improving achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies?

More than 80% of participants agreed that each thematic domain was an essential function for the central office in improving achievement for all students. Agreement ranged from 82.5% in support of *Identification of Intervention Strategies* to 90% in support of *Commitment to Instruction* and *Use of Data to Drive Decisions* (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). In addition, principals were provided with space on the survey for making suggestions for deletions and/or additions. Eleven (N=11) of the returned surveys out of 102 (N=102) included

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Table 8

Reliability Coefficient

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Systemic Focus	.829	16
Commitment to Instruction	.778	6
Use of Data to Drive Decisions	.706	11
Investment in Professional Development	.717	6
Leadership Development	.738	6
Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources	.792	5
Identification of Intervention Strategies	.855	5

Table 9

Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains

	Items within Domain	Total Responses	Responses in Agreement	Percentage of Responses In Agreement	Responses in Disagreement	Percentage of Responses in Disagreement
Systemic Focus	16	1632	1407	86.2%	225	13.8%
Commitment to Instruction	6	612	551	90.0%	61	10.0%
Use of Data to Drive Decisions	11	1122	1010	90.0%	112	10.0%
Investment in Professional Development	6	612	531	86.8%	81	13.2%
Leadership Development	6	612	512	83.7%	100	16.3%
Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources	5	510	441	86.5%	69	13.5%
Identification of Intervention Strategies	5	510	421	82.5%	89	17.5%

comments. Two (N=2) of the eleven returned surveys commented on how well the individuals thought the central office for their district was performing in each of the seven domains. Nine (N=9) of the returned surveys provided comments on the manner in which the central office could address components under each domain. None of the returned surveys included suggestions for additions to the seven domains and/or additional functions.

Systemic focus. Sixteen questions/statements were presented within the survey under the thematic domain, Systemic Focus, to which participants were asked to respond. The total percentage of responses in agreement for this thematic domain was 87.9% with 12.1% of the responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual statements ranged from 66.7% to 98.0% on 16 items (see Table 10: Responses to Individual Items under Systemic Focus). Six of the items (N=6) had 90% or greater agreement, nine responses (N=9) had between 80% and 90% agreement, and one item (N=1) had 66.7% agreement.

Commitment to Instruction. Six questions were presented within the survey under the thematic domain, Commitment to Instruction, to which participants were asked to respond. The total percentage of responses by agreement for this thematic domain was 90% with 10.0% of the responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 86.3% to 94.1%. Responses in agreement were greater than 90% on three items, and responses in agreement on three items ranged between 80% and 90% (see Table 11: Responses to Individual Items under Commitment to Instruction).

Table 10

Responses to Individual Items under Systemic Focus

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q1:	Developing a systemic focus on student achievement through a district vision.	2	2.0	100	98.0
Q2:	Ensuring that the district vision supports equity by removing barriers to providing all students with an excellent education.	13	12.7	89	87.3
Q3:	Building ownership and sustaining progress through a credible process to communicate and collaborate with multiple sectors of the community.	10	9.8	92	90.2
Q4:	Assisting stakeholders in making a commitment to a multi-year plan.	8	7.8	94	92.2
Q5:	Determining a small number of ambitious priorities for the district with measurable targets.	18	17.6	84	82.4
Q6:	Assisting all members of the organization in establishing relentless consistency while seeking continuous improvement.	15	14.7	87	85.3
Q7:	Educating stakeholders including the school board in building an improvement agenda.	20	19.6	82	80.4
Q8:	Promoting collaborative relationships that instill trust and pride in the district.	7	6.9	95	93.1
Q9:	Developing shared norms for reform practices throughout the district.	14	13.7	88	86.3

Table 10

Responses to Individual Items under Systemic Focus (continued)

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q10:	Developing processes for holding all staff members accountable to the district vision and goals.	19	18.6	83	81.4
Q11:	Developing a problem-solving focus in which problems are viewed as issues to be solved.	15	14.7	87	85.3
Q12:	Ensuring policy and program coherence by removing competing programs and requirements.	34	33.3	68	66.7
Q13:	Engaging in district-wide, research-based continuous improvement process/cycle.	5	4.9	97	95.1
Q14:	Promoting service orientation toward schools and community.	16	15.7	86	84.3
Q15:	Coordinating external assistance providers (i.e. technology, professional development, data collection).	19	18.6	83	81.4
Q16:	Empowering schools to customize as needed within a district framework.	10	9.8	92	90.2

Table 11

Responses to Individual items under Commitment to Instruction

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q17:	Establish a clear focus on instruction.	6	5.9	96	94.1
Q18:	Establishing an infrastructure that supports instruction as the key component in the district.	12	11.8	90	88.2
Q19:	Ensuring alignment of state and district standards, assessments, and student objectives.	7	6.9	95	93.1
Q20:	Identifying research based on programs, strategies, and instructional practices.	9	8.8	93	91.2
Q21:	Assisting in the selection and deep alignment of instructional materials to district objectives and assessments as well as state assessments.	14	13.7	88	86.3
Q22:	Designing pacing guides with a feasible number of objectives to be taught in the time allotted.	13	12.7	89	87.3

Use of data to drive decisions. Eleven questions/statements were presented within the survey under the thematic domain, Use of Data to Drive Decisions, to which participants were asked to respond. The total percentage of responses by agreement for this thematic domain was 90% with 10.0% of the responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 77.5% to 99.0%. Responses in agreement were greater than 90% on seven items, between 80% and 90% on two items, and between 70% and 80% on two items (see Table 12: Responses to Individual Items under Use of Data to Drive Decisions).

Investment in professional development. Six statements/questions were presented within the survey under the thematic domain, Investment in Professional Development, to which participants were asked to respond. The total percentage of responses by agreement for this thematic domain was 86.8% with 13.2% of responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 77.5% to 94.1%. Responses in agreement were greater than 90% for three items, between 80% and 90% for two items, and between 70% and 80% for one item (see Table 13: Responses to Individual Items under Investment in Professional Development).

Leadership development. Six statements/questions were presented within the survey under the thematic domain, Leadership Development, to which participants were asked to respond. The total percentage of responses by agreement for this thematic domain was 83.7% with 16.3% in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual

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Table 12

Responses to Individual Items under Use of Data to Drive Decisions

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q23	Establishing multi-measure accountability systems.	8	7.8	94	92.2
Q24	Promoting overall transparency of the results related to the core business of the district.	1	1.0	101	99.0
Q25	Developing formative assessments aligned with the curriculum and summative assessments.	13	12.7	89	87.3
Q26	Assisting in benchmarking between schools within the district and with other districts as a whole.	23	22.5	79	77.5
Q27	Constructing mechanisms to provide data at all levels of the system.	5	4.9	97	95.1
Q28	Promoting data-based decision making at all levels of the district.	7	6.9	95	93.1
Q29:	Setting growth targets based on data.	10	9.8	92	90.2
Q30:	Assessing progress toward district goals and individual school objectives.	8	7.8	94	92.2
Q31:	Providing assistance to schools in understanding and use of data.	3	2.9	99	97.1
Q32:	Ensuring available technology support for maintaining and communicating data.	11	10.8	91	89.2
Q33:	Utilizing program evaluations to document a program's data-based merit.	23	22.5	79	77.5

Table 13

Responses to Individual Items under Investment in Professional Development

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q34	Ensuring system-wide professional development focused on building the capacity to improve learning and teaching.	19	18.6	83	81.4
Q35	Providing high-quality professional development that is on-going, job-embedded, and aligned with identified needs and targeted goals.	23	22.5	79	77.5
Q36	Providing professional development for role-alike groups (i.e. counselors, media specialists, principals).	16	15.7	86	84.3
Q37	Providing professional development to assist new employees in understanding district expectations.	10	9.8	92	90.2
Q38	Establishing formal and informal mentoring programs.	7	6.9	95	93.1
Q39	Supporting structures for learning communities throughout the district (i.e. schools, school based specialists, central services staffs).	6	5.9	96	94.1

items ranged from 74.5% to 89.2%. Five of the items had responses in agreement

between 80% and 90% and one item had responses in agreement between 70% and

80% (see Table 14: Responses to Individual Items under Leadership Development).

      Optimal use of human and financial resources. Five statements/questions were

presented within the survey under the thematic domain, Optimal Use of Human and

Financial Resources, to which participants were asked to respond. The percentage of

responses by agreement for this thematic domain was 86.5% with 13.5% in

disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains).

Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 76.5% to 93.1%. Responses

in agreement were greater than 90% for two items, between 80% and 90% for two

items, and between 70% and 80% for one item (see Table 15: Responses to Individual

Items under Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources).

      Identification of intervention strategies. Five statements/questions were

presented within the survey under the thematic domain, Identification of Intervention

Strategies, to which participants were asked to respond. The total percentage of

responses by agreement for this thematic domain was 82.5% with 17.5% in

disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains).

Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 76.5% to 88.2%. Four items

had agreement between 80% and 90% and one item had agreement between 70% and

80%. (see Table 16: Responses to individual items under Identification of Intervention

Strategies).

Table 14

Responses to Individual Items under Leadership Development

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q40	Encouraging distributed leadership through job embedded work.	11	10.8	91	88.2
Q41	Ensuring strong instructional leadership by advancing skills of district and school leaders.	15	14.7	87	85.3
Q42	Providing all leaders with the knowledge to understand the elements of organizational change.	15	14.7	87	85.3
Q43	Ensuring the principal is the instructional leader within the school.	16	15.7	86	94.3
Q44	Partnering with institutes of higher education to provide professional development.	17	16.7	85	83.3
Q45	Offering advancement for the most effective individuals.	26	25.5	76	74.5

Table 15

Responses to Individual Items under Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q46	Prioritizing resources to align with and drive the district goals.	7	6.9	95	93.1
Q47	Ensuring equitable distribution of resources.	24	23.5	78	76.5
Q48	Ensuring transparent distribution of resources.	12	11.8	90	88.2
Q49	Assisting schools in understanding finances.	10	9.8	92	90.2
Q50	Seeking alternative revenues.	16	15.7	86	84.3

Table 16

Responses to Individual Items under Identification of Intervention Strategies

		Responses in Disagreement		Percentage of Responses in Disagreement	
		N	%	N	%
Q51	Developing and supporting multi-tiered intervention services/strategies.	14	13.7	88	86.3
Q52	Assisting in finding a balance between strategies that focus on practice and drill and programs that are interactive.	20	19.6	82	80.4
Q53	Developing alternative programs for students who cannot succeed in the traditional learning environment.	24	23.5	78	76.5
Q54	Providing professional development related to intervention strategies.	19	18.6	83	81.4
Q55	Using data for decision-making related to intervention strategies.	12	11.8	90	88.2

Research Question #2

The second research question stated: Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP? The following null hypotheses were investigated:

$H_0$1: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$2: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a commitment to instruction among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$3: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the use of data to drive decisions among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$4: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the investment in professional development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$5: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in promoting leadership development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$6: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the optimal use of human and financial resources among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

H$_0$7: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the identification of intervention strategies among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

Fisher's Exact Tests. In order to address the second research question, seven Fisher's exact tests were performed to examine the relationship between principals' perceptions in schools that met AYP and principals' perceptions in schools that did not meet AYP regarding the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, focus on leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies.

Fisher's exact test is a statistical, nonparametric test used to analyze categorical data (Sheskin, 2007). The Fisher's exact test computes the probability of getting a table as strong as the observed table (Salkind, 2005). A 2x2 table is used to compute the exact probability, thus comparing two variables, each with two categories (Salkind, 2005). For this study, the Fisher's exact tests were used to compare the responses of principals (agree, disagree) for each thematic domain with the NCLB status of the school they represented (met AYP, did not meet AYP). The Fisher exact test of significance was chosen as the statistic of analysis in place of the more commonly used Chi-square test. An assumption of the Chi-Square Test for Independence is that the expected frequencies in a 2x2 table are at least 5 (Salkind, 2005). Depending on the number of principals that responded and how they responded, unequal distribution in the 2x2 frequency table resulting in a cell size of less than 5 responses was a possibility. Having a cell size of less than 5 would violate one of the assumptions for

using Chi-Square; therefore, the Fisher's exact test was used in place of the Chi-Square Test for Independence.

The Fisher's exact test was used to ascertain the frequency of distribution of principals' perceptions regarding the functions of the central office in increasing achievement for all students based on two categorical variables: (1) agreement or disagreement on statements defining the role of central services; and (2) met/not met for AYP. A total of 7 two-tailed Fisher's exact tests were conducted at the .05 significance level, or $p < .05$, which is generally accepted by researchers (Creswell, 2005). The results of the Fisher's exact tests show that a statistical relationship did not exist between the perceptions of principals in schools that met AYP and principals in schools that did not make AYP (see Table 17: Results of Fisher's exact tests).

Hypotheses.

H01: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP. The results of the Fisher's exact test showed no significant association between the perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=1.000, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests). Therefore, H01 was accepted.

Table 17

Results of Fisher's Exact Tests

	Surveys Included	Exact Significance (2-sided)
Systemic Focus	102	1.000
Commitment to Instruction	102	.644
Use of Data to Drive Decisions	102	1.000
Investment in Professional Development	102	.534
Leadership Development	102	1.000
Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources	102	1.000
Identification of Intervention Strategies	102	.669

H$_0$2: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of the district's

role in maintaining a commitment to instruction among principals of schools that

made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP. The results of the

Fisher's exact test showed no significant association between the perceptions of

the district's role in maintaining a commitment to instruction among principals of

schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP

(p=.644, two-tailed Fisher's Exact Test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact

Tests). Therefore, H$_0$2 was accepted.

H$_0$3: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of the district's

role in the use of data to drive decisions among principals of schools that made

AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP. The results of the Fisher's

exact test showed no significant association between the perceptions of the

district's role in the use of data to drive decisions among principals of schools

that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=1.000, two-

tailed Fisher's Exact Test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

Therefore, H$_0$3 was accepted.

H$_0$4: A statistical relationship did not exist between the perceptions of the

district's role in the investment in professional development among principals of

schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP. The

results of the Fisher's exact test showed no significant association between the

perceptions of the district's role in the investment in professional development

among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not

make AYP (p=.534, two-tailed Fisher's Exact Test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests). Therefore, $H_0 4$ was accepted.

$H_0 5$: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of the district's role in promoting leadership development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP. The results of the Fisher's exact test showed no significant association between the perceptions of the district's role in promoting leadership development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=1.000 two-tailed Fisher's Exact Test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests). Therefore, $H_0 5$ was accepted.

$H_0 6$: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of the district's role in the optimal use of human and financial resources among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP. The results of the Fisher's exact test showed no significant association between the perceptions of the district's role in the optimal use of human and financial resources among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=1.000, two-tailed Fisher's Exact Test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests). Therefore, $H_0 6$ was accepted.

$H_0 7$: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of the district's role in the identification of intervention strategies among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP. The results of the Fisher's exact test showed no significant association between the perceptions of the district's role in the identification of intervention strategies among principals of

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schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=.669,

two-tailed Fisher's Exact Test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

Therefore, H_07 was accepted.

Focus Group Interview

After surveys were returned, participants were invited to participate in a focus

group. A focus group interview is an interview with a small group of people on a specific

topic (Patton, 2002). The purpose of the focus group was to further explore the level of

consensus among responses on the survey (see Appendix F: Focus Group Questions).

Convenience sampling was the method of identifying participants for the focus

group. Due to conflicts in schedules and the time of the year in which the survey and

focus group were conducted, finding a time and location that best served all participants

became difficult. After a date and time for the focus group interview had been

determined, the date was changed due to a conflict in a district meeting which required

all principals to be in attendance.

Prior to the focus group, participants were asked to sign the *Principal's Consent

Form to Participate in the Focus Group* (see Appendix A: Institutional Review Board

Approval Letter). During the interview, written notes were taken and the discussion was

recorded. Even though participants signed a consent form, participants were reminded

verbally that the session would be recorded and quotations could potentially be utilized

within the study.

The focus group interview reaffirmed the findings from the survey. The

participants agreed that each of the seven thematic domains included in the survey

were critical functions of the central office. Within chapter 5, additional information

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related to responses is included. Selected quotations are included that add further explanation to the responses.

In addition, the focus group offered several suggestions for related studies. While these suggestions mainly related to administering the survey to different groups and comparing the results, there was one suggestion for further exploration of the thematic domain, *Identification of Intervention Strategies.* These suggestions are discussed under Implications and Recommendations for Further Study.

Summary

This chapter included detailed analyses of data associated with this study. Before addressing the research questions and the null hypotheses, this study assessed the reliability of each of the seven thematic domains by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha Test for Reliability. The results for each of the thematic domains ranged from .706 to .855 (see Table 8: Reliability Coefficient), which is considered an acceptable to good range. These results suggested that items on the survey within each of the thematic domains represent one dimension.

Responses to the items on the survey were used to answer the first research question: Which district functions do principals believe are essential in improving achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies? The total percentage of responses for each thematic domain showed that 80% or more of participants completing the survey agreed that each thematic domain was an essential function for the central office in improving achievement for all students.

Principals were also provided with space on the survey for making suggestions, including deletions and/or additions. While eleven (N=11) of the total surveys (N=102) included comments, none of the comments included suggestions for additions or deletions to the functions for the central office as identified in chapter 2.

To answer the second research question, a total of seven two-tailed Fisher's exact tests were conducted at a .05 significance level: Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP? As a result, all seven of the null hypotheses were accepted. A discussion of implications, recommendations for practice and recommendations for future studies are included in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

As districts seek to re-examine the relationship between the school and the central office (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Dufour, 2007; Guskey, 2007; Honig & Copland, 2008; Protheroe, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008), additional research is needed to define the role of the central office (Fullan, 1991; Honig & Copland, 2008; MacIver & Farley-Ripple, 2008; Pajak et al., 1998). A theoretical framework outlining the functions of the central office was included in chapter 2. The purpose of this study was to add to the limited research by determining whether principals agreed or disagreed with the domains identified within the framework, and then to determine if there was a relationship between perceptions of principals in schools that met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) and schools that did not meet AYP under *NCLB.*

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Which district functions do principals believe are essential in improving achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies?

2. Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP?

In addition, this study investigated seven null hypotheses:

$H_0$1: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$2: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in maintaining a commitment to instruction among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$3: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the use of data to drive decisions among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$4: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the investment in professional development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$5: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in promoting leadership development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$6: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the optimal use of human and financial resources among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

$H_0$7: There is no statistical relationship between perceptions of the district's role in the identification of intervention strategies among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP.

Assumptions

This study made the following assumptions:

1. It was assumed that principals participating in the study would be honest and forthright in responding to statements on the survey.

2. It was assumed that principals participating in the study had some knowledge of the role of the central office in improving student achievement.

Participants

A large, urban district located in the Southeast was the setting for the study. One hundred and fifty-one principals were invited to participate in the study. Out of the eligible participants (N=151), 67.5% returned surveys (N=102). Forty-one surveys or 40.2% represented schools that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Sixty-one surveys or 59.8% represented schools that did make AYP (See Table 7: AYP Status of Schools Represented by Participants). These percentages paralleled the overall percentages for AYP within the district in which the study was conducted. During the 2008-2009 school year, 62.8% of the schools within the district made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and 37.2% did not make AYP (see Table 6: Comparison of AYP Status for District and AYP Status for Study).

Survey

A survey was developed to include a synthesis of the research related to the functions of the central office essential for improving achievement for all students. The survey consisted of 55 items (see Table 5: Number of Items within Survey). Participants were asked whether they *agreed* or *disagreed* with each statement. At the

end of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to make comments including

additions and/or deletions to the survey.

In order to determine internal consistency reliability on the survey, Cronbach's

Alpha or Reliability Coefficient (Garson, 2008) was computed for each of the 7 thematic

domains. These tests evaluated whether the items within one domain on the survey

were consistent with one another and if they represented one, and only one dimension

or area of interest (Garson, 2008; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Salkind, 2005; Santos, 1991).

Alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1 (Santo, 1999). A value of .70 or higher is

generally accepted as the cut-off for a set of items to be considered a scale (Garson,

2008; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Santos, 1991).

Results of Cronbach's Alpha Test for Reliability for each of the seven thematic

domains within this study ranged from .706 to .855 (see Table 8: Reliability Coefficient).

These results fall within an acceptable to good range, which suggested that items within

each of the thematic domains were consistent in that they represented one dimension

Gliem and Gliem (2003).

Findings and Discussion

The study included two research questions. Each question was addressed

separately. In addition to the findings from the survey, relevant information obtained

during the focus group session was also included in the discussion.

Research Question #1

The first research question stated: Which district functions do principals believe

are essential in improving achievement for all students: systemic focus, commitment to

instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development,

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leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies? The total percentage of responses in agreement for each thematic domain was 82.5% or greater for participants completing the survey. The thematic domains that received the highest percentage of responses in agreement were Commitment to Instruction and Use of Data to Drive Decisions. In each of these domains, 90% of the participants agreed that these functions were essential to improving achievement for all students. The thematic domain that received the lowest percentage of responses in agreement was Identification of Intervention Strategies with 82.5% of the survey participants in agreement. Due to recent changes within the district, principals within the focus group interview commented that the uncertainty in student assignments and how intervention may be determined contributed to the lower percentage.

Figure 5, Percentages of Responses, clearly reveals a pattern in which the majority of the principals participating in the survey agreed that the seven thematic domains are essential in improving achievement for all students. In addition, the trend lines show that the gap between principals who agreed and principals who disagreed remained consistent. This pattern suggests that principals are in agreement with the emerging research, which warns that the school does not exist in seclusion and cannot be expected to lead the charge alone (Daresh, 2004; Hargreaves, 1997; Hatch, 2009; Honig & Copland, 2008; Le Floch, Carlson, Taylor, & Thomsen, 2006; Markward, 2008; Protheroe, 2008; Rallis & Highsmith, 1986; Togneri & Anderson, 2003a).

On the survey, principals were provided with space for making suggestions. Out of one hundred and two returned surveys (N=102), eleven (N=11) surveys were

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
■ Disagree	13.8	10	10	13.2	16.3	13.5	17.5
□ Agree	86.2	90	90	86.8	83.7	86.5	82.5

Figure 5. Percentages of responses.

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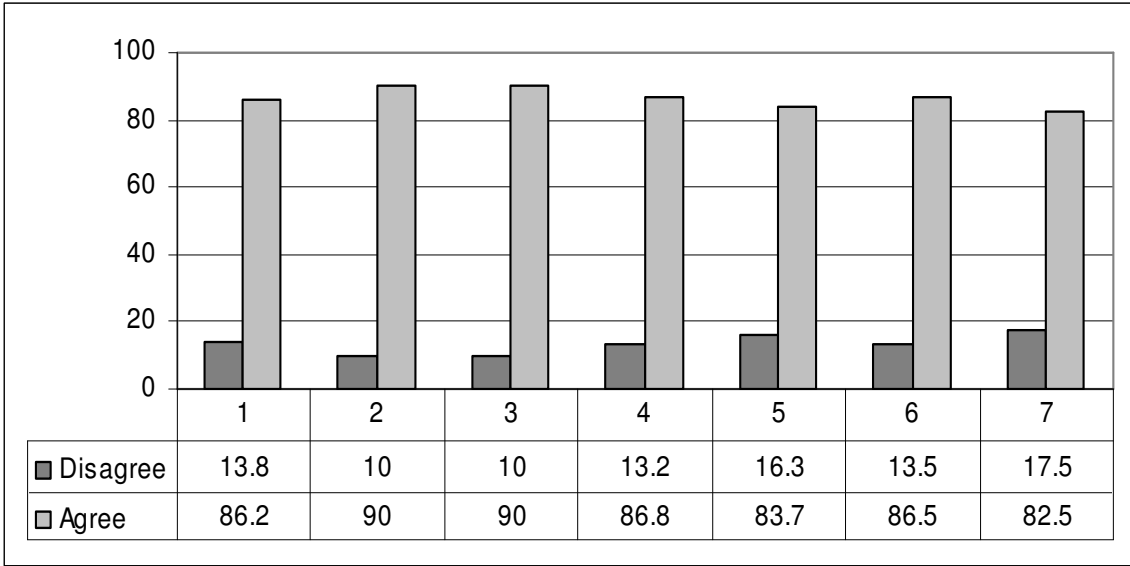
returned with written comments. Two of the surveys (N=2) included comments praising the central office in the district in which the principals were employed. Nine of the surveys (N=9) included comments expanding on items included within the survey. None of the participants offered suggestions for additions or deletions to the survey

In the focus group, participants were also asked if there were functions of the central office that should have been added to or deleted from the survey. All of the participants agreed that the survey was complete and did not suggest any additions or deletions. One participant summarized the responses of the focus group participants:

> All of these functions are critical. If the central office does not handle these
>
> areas, then it falls back to the school. We really do not have the time to address
>
> these areas. Even as an experienced principal, I feel should be provided in
>
> most of these areas (Focus Group Participant).

Systemic focus. Under Systemic Focus, the total percentage of responses in agreement was 86.2% with 13.8% of the responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual statements ranged from 66.7% to 98.0% (see Table 10: Responses to Individual Items under Systemic Focus).

One item (N=1) had an agreement of 66.7%, which was the lowest for all items within the survey. This item stated: "In your opinion, do you think the central office, through systemic focus, helps increase student achievement by ensuring policy and program coherence by removing competing programs and requirements." This response rate was explored further within the focus group. Participants were asked why this statement may have had lower agreement than other items within this thematic

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domain. One participant responded, "I believe that most principals understand the need for removing competing programs; however, as they (principals) answered they were thinking about the possibility of losing flexibility." Participants said the current economic situation as well as recent changes within their district influenced responses.   When asked if this item should be removed from the survey, and thus, removed from the thematic framework, all principals within the focus group agreed that it should not be removed, including one of the participants who admitted answering that he had marked "Disagree" to this statement.

Commitment to instruction. Under the domain, Commitment to Instruction, the total percentage of responses by agreement was 90% with 10.0% of the responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 86.3% to 94.1% (see Table 11: Responses to Individual Items under Commitment to Instruction). The general consensus among the focus group supported the survey results. There was agreement that this thematic domain accurately reflected the role of the central office.

Use of data to drive decisions. Under the thematic domain, Use of Data to Drive Decisions, the total percentage of responses by agreement was 90% with 10.0% of the responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 77.5% to 99.0% (see Table 12: Responses to Individual Items under Use of Data to Drive Decisions). The general consensus among the focus groups was that this domain was critical to improving student achievement, which was supported by the survey results.

Investment in professional development. Under the thematic domain, Investment in Professional Development, the total percentage of responses by agreement was 86.8% with 13.2% of responses in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 77.5% to 94.1% (see Table 13: Responses to Individual Items under Investment in Professional Development). The general consensus among the focus groups was that this domain was critical to improving student achievement, which was supported by the survey results.

Leadership development. Under the thematic domain, Leadership Development, the total percentage of responses by agreement was 83.7% with 16.3% in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 74.5% to 89.2% (see Table 14: Responses to Individual Items under Leadership Development). The general consensus among the focus groups was that this domain was critical to improving student achievement, which was supported by the survey results.

Optimal use of human and financial resources. Under the thematic domain, Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources, the percentage of responses by agreement was 86.5% with 13.5% in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 76.5% to 93.1% (see Table 15: Responses to Individual Items under Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources). The general consensus among the focus groups was that this domain was critical to improving student achievement, which was supported by the survey results.

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Identification of intervention strategies. Under the thematic domain, Identification of Intervention Strategies, the total percentage of responses by agreement was 82.5% with 17.5% in disagreement (see Table 9: Summary for Frequencies in Seven Thematic Domains). Responses in agreement for individual items ranged from 76.5% to 88.2% (see Table 16: Responses to Individual Items under Identification of Intervention Strategies). The general consensus among the focus group was that this domain was critical to improving student achievement, which was supported by the survey results. However, one participant suggested an expansion of this domain. As a principal of a magnet school, he felt that this area should include enrichment.

While the research within this study did not identify enrichment as a critical role of the central office for improving achievement, acceleration was addressed in chapter 2, under *Support Multi-Tiered Intervention.* The work of Chafin (2005) and Louis et al. (2009) emphasized multi-tiered intervention services as critical for prevention but also for differentiating instruction required in providing acceleration. In addition, a publication from the *Center of Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement* reported at-risk students as often being placed in programs focused on practice and drill, and accelerated students were provided more interactive, "learning for learning's sake" courses. Chafin (2005) further suggested a better balance, citing accelerated students as often the students that needed skills related to how to complete assignments and at-risk students needed courses demonstrating that education can be fun.

Research Question #2

The second research question stated: Is there a statistical relationship between the perceptions of principals in schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did

not make AYP? Fisher's Exact Test of Significance was chosen as the statistic of

analysis for addressing this question over Chi-Square Test for Independence because

an assumption of the Chi-Square Test for Independence is that the expected

frequencies in a 2x2 table are at least 5 (Salkind, 2005). Due to the uncertainty related

to the number of principals who would respond and how they would respond, there was

the possibility of creating unequal distribution in the 2x2 frequency table, resulting in a

cell size of less than 5 responses.

The Fisher's exact test was used to ascertain the frequency of distribution of

principals' perceptions regarding the functions of the central office in increasing

achievement for all students based on two categorical variables: (1) agreement or

disagreement on statements defining the role of central services; and (2) met or not met

for AYP goals. A total of seven two-tailed Fisher's exact tests were conducted at the

.05 significance level, or $p < .05$, which is generally accepted by researchers (Creswell,

2005). A total of seven Fisher's exact tests were performed, each one examining one of

the null hypotheses. In each case, a statistical relationship did not exist between the

perceptions of principals regarding the district's role with each thematic domain. As a

result each hypothesis was accepted.

$H_0$1: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of principals

regarding the district's role in maintaining a systemic focus among principals of

schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP

(p=1.000, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact

Tests).

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H$_0$2: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of principals regarding the district's role in maintaining a commitment to instruction among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=.644, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

H$_0$3: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of principals regarding the district's role in the use of data to drive decisions among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=1.000, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

H$_0$4: A statistical relationship did not exist between the perceptions of principals regarding the district's role in the investment in professional development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=.534, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

H$_0$5: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of principals regarding the district's role in promoting leadership development among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=.1.000, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

H$_0$6: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of principals regarding the district's role in the optimal use of human and financial resources among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not

make AYP (p=1.000, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

H$_0$7: A statistical relationship did not exist between perceptions of principals regarding the district's role in the identification of intervention strategies among principals of schools that made AYP and principals of schools that did not make AYP (p=.669, two-tailed Fisher's exact test) (see Table 17: Result of Fisher's Exact Tests).

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations of the study should be taken into account:

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This study relied heavily on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP continues to receive debate and criticism due to the narrow focus on test scores (Cavanagh, 2009a; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008; Lang, 2007; Guzman, 2010).

Working conditions. Other factors within the district and the schools that typically influence working conditions were not taken into account for this study. Examples of these factors include time, atmosphere, school leadership, district leadership, facilities, resources, and teacher involvement (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009).

Selection criteria for participation in the survey. Participant selection criteria did not include distinguishing factors such as experience in teaching, longevity in their current position, or previous administrative positions held in the North Carolina Public School System or any other state. The participants for this study were based on 2009-2010 assignments.

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Participation in focus group. Convenience sampling was the method of identifying participants for the focus group. Due to conflicts in schedules and the time of the year in which the survey and focus group were conducted, finding a time and location that best served all participants became difficult. The date was rescheduled once due to a change in a district meeting which required all principals to be in attendance.

*Testing data used. S*tudent achievement data used for this study included End-of-Grade (EOG) tests and End-of-Course (EOC) tests. These tests are used to measure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which is the reason for their selection. Other testing data such as Effectiveness Indexes, EVAAS and the State Growth Model were not used.

Relevance to other districts. Even though the study was limited to one district, insights can be gleaned by other districts. However, each school district must also consider its unique characteristics as well as the characteristics of the community that the district serves.

<div align="center">Implications</div>

The overall results of this bed of research and the related study show that there is a need for district involvement in increasing achievement for all students. The literature and research used within this study describe the behaviors of the central office that will be required in improving student achievement. The responses of principals in this study confirm the research. Principals agreed on the type of support that is needed for improving student achievement and welcomed the support.

The findings from this study have implications for district leaders, boards of education, and policy-making bodies as they seek solutions for increasing achievement within reduced budgets. The findings also have implications for the roles and relationships between school-based administrators and central office administrators/supervisors. In addition, institutions of higher education need to consider the implications for school and central office administrator preparation programs as well as support that can be provided to states and districts in making this change.

Implications for District Leaders, Boards of Education, and Policy-Making Bodies

Given the findings of this study, district leaders, boards of education, and policy-making bodies can no longer ignore the reality of the role of district staff in improving student achievement. They must accept their moral and ethical obligation for the education of all students, by holding themselves accountable for implementing research findings of this and other studies which speak to the role of school districts in improving student achievement. The current research, supported by the findings of this study, indicates that a systemic, district approach will be required for substantive, sustainable improvements. Structures will be required that support and develop new relationships between the school and the central office. Within these relationships, the school should no longer be expected to shoulder the burden of increasing achievement for all students alone. Nor should the unique role of the central office in providing support to the school be ignored.

Furthermore, state and district leaders must be aware of and willing to accept the difficulties that will be faced in making this change. The lingering image of the supervisor, well entrenched in history, combined with the current model for school

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improvement in which the school is the sole source of change must be confronted. In some cases this change will be applauded, while in many cases it might be viewed as leading with an ineffective, top-down approach.

This study and the related research identified within the study should be good news to state boards of education, superintendents, and boards of education choosing to accept this challenge. The emerging research supported by this study unequivocally identifies the potential positive role of the central office in improving student achievement. No longer can the public and/or legislatures act as though the central office is a meaningless participant in efforts to improve student achievement. However, recognition of these findings by the public and/or legislatures will mean a new level of accountability for district leaders in ensuring central office support for increasing achievement. Accepting this challenge will no longer be an option but rather a responsibility.

In addition, state boards of education, local boards of education, and district leaders will be required to do more than just recognize and accept the need for new roles and relationships between schools and the central office. Well-defined frameworks including expectations, responsibilities, behaviors, and parameters of flexibility must be identified for all members of the organization as well as measures for ensuring accountability. The work of the district leaders cannot stop there but must consider every facet of the organization for alignment and cohesion. Heeding the warnings of Fullan (2010), only through alignment and cohesion will *collective efficacy* be maximized to achieve results throughout the district (p. 48).

Implications for School and Central Office Administrators

This study has implications for school and central office administrators. School and central office administrators must be willing to move to a new level of cooperation, shared responsibilities, and accountability with the common vision of increasing achievement for all students. Not only must they hold each other accountable, but they must also hold district leaders accountable for initiating and supporting this change. No longer should principals willingly accept more accountability without the appropriate knowledge, resources and support, nor should supervisors work silently behind the scenes to avoid crossing the invisible boundaries between the central office and the school. A transparent accountability model in which school staffs, the central office staff, the superintendent, and the boards of education hold each other responsible for the behaviors and the quality of their performance will be required.

Furthermore, principals and central office administrators must recognize their unique leadership roles. Through their positions, they shape opinions of teachers and staffs. By helping others in the organization recognize the benefits of collaborative efforts between the schools and central office, the full potential of these new roles and relationships will be realized, thereby improving student achievement.

Implications for Institutions of Higher Education

Institutions of higher education are in the unique position to shape the attitudes of future school and central office administrators before they enter their positions. Thus, this study has implications for school administrator and supervision preparation programs. Through preparation programs, institutions of higher education can promote new levels of cooperation, increase understanding of the benefits of shared

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responsibility and accountability, and develop the skills and knowledge that will be required of future administrators to impact student achievement through a systemic, collaborative approach.

Given the lack of research related to the central office supervisor, institutions of higher education also have a responsibility to conduct/sponsor research related to practices for redesigning the roles and relationship between the school and the central office. Currently, practice has outpaced research and as more states and districts accept the challenge of redefining the relationship between the school and the central office, additional information to guide the process will be required.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

The demands of *NCLB* and stagnated student achievement make this study very timely and beneficial to education leaders in their decision-making. This section includes recommendations for practice and identifies areas in which there is a need for further research.

Recommendations for State-policy Makers, State Boards of Education, and Local Boards of Education

Revise state and local policies and related regulations and procedures (R&P). As stated in chapter 2, many states and districts across the nation are still operating within the confines of policies that support the schools existing in isolation. Many of these policies were developed over the last twenty years. State-policy makers, state boards of education, and local boards of education should recognize and remove any policies and related R&P that impede the ability of districts to increase student achievement through a district, systemic approach. While this study identifies the power

of a systemic district approach, structures that support and develop these new roles and

relationships between the school and the central office will be most effective if they are

supported through the alignment of policies at the state and local levels.

Establish statewide standards of practice. State standards are often in place for

superintendents, principals, and teachers; however, standards are rarely in place for

central office administrators/supervisors. Based on the findings of this study, state

standards addressing the functions/behaviors/practices for central office

administrators/supervisors should be developed. The domains within this bed of

research could serve as the framework for these standards.

Develop statewide assessments for central office standards of practice. State-

policy makers and state boards of education choosing to develop standards of practice

should also consider assessments to hold central office administrators/supervisors

within each district accountable to behaviors that have a positive impact on student

achievement. These assessments should be clearly aligned with standards for practice.

While this information would be useful to districts as they evaluate support

provided for student achievement, this information could also be useful in addressing

turnover rates for school-based administrators. These data would allow districts to

capitalize upon strengths for recruitment and retention purposes and to identify areas in

which improvements are still needed as well. Data would give perspective

administrative candidates an awareness of the strengths at the district level, thereby,

assisting them in determining districts that match their personal strengths and

weaknesses. While assessments for central office performance could prove beneficial

to superintendents and boards of education, comparative data between districts may

also serve as another factor to assist in analyzing turnover rates for the state as a whole.

Include assessment results in state accountability models. While student achievement must remain at the center of the state accountability models, assessment results evaluating the performance of each district central office could be a component included in state accountability models. Rather than basing the district report card completely on the performance of the schools, implementation of effective district behaviors/practices could also be included as a component. Including district assessments of how well they are implementing their role of fostering student achievement would add a needed dimension to annual district report cards in light of this research. It would increase transparency for the public and create a sense of urgency in district leadership for improving the performance of central office staff in the identified behaviors that increase student achievement.

Recommendations for Practices within Districts

Acknowledge the issues and accept the challenge. District leaders must, first and foremost, recognize the need the change. This process begins with an open, honest review of current student achievement as well as expectations for student achievement.

Provide stakeholders with opportunities to increase awareness of the need for new roles and relationships. District leaders undertaking change must be keenly aware of the negative image of the central office, well-embedded in the minds of educators and the public. The emerging research warns that overcoming this image will be the major hurdle that districts will face. With this in mind, district leaders must provide

opportunities to assist stakeholders, including board members, in accepting and understanding the benefits of redefining the roles and relationship between the school and the central office.

Establish clear responsibilities for principals and central office administrators. District leaders may find themselves in the difficult situation of approaching changes recommended within the research without state standards. Whether the district must establish their own standards for the central office administrators/supervisors or can work within a state established framework, clearly defined functions, behaviors, and expectations for the central office as well as parameters of flexibility for the schools should exist. Districts could include functions and practices for the central office that are aligned under each of the following thematic domains within this study: systemic focus, commitment to instruction, use of data to drive decisions, investment in professional development, leadership development, optimal use of human and financial resources, and identification of intervention strategies. While district leaders will need to consider the unique characteristics of the community served by the district, districts must also recognize the interrelatedness of each domain, and the reduced impact of implementing selected functions in isolation.

Review the organizational structure of the central office. Redefining roles and relationships between the central office and the school may require changes in the organizational structure of the district. District leaders must openly and honestly evaluate the structure of the central office against the findings of this research and be willing to make changes that will provide support for the schools in the areas identified within the thematic domains. This review may require the elimination of existing

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functions of the central office administrator/supervisor that are unnecessary or impede gains in improving student achievement.

Provide necessary professional development for central office administrators and principals. Professional development initiatives have traditionally targeted teachers and building-level administrators. Overcoming well entrenched beliefs and developing new skills will require extensive professional development for principals and central office administrators. District leaders will be required to recognize that entire careers for many administrators may have been characterized by a focus on site-based management. This professional development will need to focus on assisting principals and central office administrators in understanding their pivotal roles, methods for collaboration, as well as the advantages of shared responsibility for student achievement. While the need for initial training is readily recognized, district leaders must also ensure on-going, job-embedded professional development to the greatest extent possible.

In addition, new behaviors will be required of the central office administrators/supervisors, which may require new skills. District leaders must ensure that these administrators/supervisors are provided with professional development that addresses the knowledge and skills needed in these new roles.

Provide opportunities for collaboration. Even though collaboration and common time for problem-solving are generally considered as a component of professional development, these areas are addressed separately here for emphasis. Traditionally, on-going collaboration has occurred within schools and the central office separately. District leaders and local boards of education must implement and support structures that guarantee opportunities for collaboration between the central office and the school.

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Maintain support for schools that did and did not make AYP. As a part of a systemic focus, districts must consider funding issues and different types of support for schools based on equity issues. However, district leaders will want to be extremely careful in maintaining a foundation of support for all schools. District leaders must be aware of the increased responsibilities currently placed on all principals and teachers. They must also recognize that certain behaviors, skills, and levels of support must be present throughout the district in order to maintain a systemic focus. Principals within this study consistently identified the same critical functions of the central office as important to increased achievement for their students. Therefore, the functions for the central office within the seven thematic domains identified within the research could serve as the foundation of support for all schools.

Utilize functions within thematic domains to prioritize funding. The results of this study have an impact on funding prioritizes for districts. Districts are currently involved in determining essential support for increasing achievement within reduced operating budgets. The thematic domains identified through current research and confirmed by principals within the study identified essential functions of the district that could serve as a guide in determining priorities within the budget.

Recommendations for Institutions of Higher Education

Lay the foundation for new roles and relationships between the school and the central office. Institutions of Higher Education are in the unique position of shaping belief systems of educators, including teachers, principals, and supervisors, through preparation programs. Currently, districts that choose to accept the challenge of reorganizing themselves to align with this research are in the lonely position of trying to

overcome the negative image of the central office supervisor while implementing organizational change with almost no support. While these efforts are notable and necessary, Institutions of Higher Education could assist by taking the lead. Preparation programs that focus on eliminating the negative image of the supervisor by disseminating the findings of this and related research, and then, developing their students' skill sets to support the implementation of the collaborative roles identified in this research will be needed. Without inclusion of these elements in preparation programs, educators will not have the necessary skills for a life-long career, and even worse, necessary changes may fail to reach all districts, thus resulting in the continued stagnation of student achievement and erosion of confidence in public education.

Place increased emphasis on preparation programs for supervisors. Preparation programs for the principals and supervisors have generally focused on school leadership. If supervisors are going to be seen as equal partners in identifying solutions and accepting responsibility for increased achievement, equal attention should be considered for supervision preparation programs. The unique skills and knowledge that will be required of supervisors should be emphasized in order to prepare supervisors for collaborating with schools and leading change.

Organize content of preparation programs around thematic domains. The thematic domains identified within this research and supported by this study provide possible indicators of the knowledge and skills required of central office supervisors in supporting increased achievement. Given the results of this study, the functions identified within the thematic domains could serve as a framework for course content in supervision preparation programs.

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Furthermore, preparation programs for the school administrator could also consider the skills and knowledge within these domains. While these domains outline the functions of the central office, they also define the parameters of flexibility for the school leader.

*Include skills for collaboration in preparation programs. S*chool leaders and supervisors must know how to develop collaborative relationships that result in increased achievement for all students. While this sounds simple, the reality is that too many attempts to collaborate end in frustration. With this in mind, courses should be designed to influence participants' understanding of the purpose for collaboration as well as developing the required skills.

Support districts by providing on-going training. Institutions of Higher Education can support programs for new administrators through preparation programs; however, support must also be available to practicing administrators, who may have spent the majority of their careers operating under site-based management. Institutions for Higher Education could provide vital support to districts undergoing this change by providing support for related professional development.

Assist states and local districts in developing tools for assessing central office support for increased student achievement. Institutions of Higher Education can assist state boards of education and local districts by developing assessment tools to be utilized in evaluating the support provided to schools. Since principals within this study confirm seven domains from the research as crucial support from the central office, the domains could potentially be used as a framework for developing these tools.

Institutions of Higher Education can also provide increased support to districts by providing external audits and removing subjectivity present in self-evaluations.

Recommendations for Further Research

As districts seek to undertake this challenge, additional research will be essential to assist in guiding the way. Researchers, including institutions of higher education, must accept this responsibility by adding to the extremely limited bed of research.

Perceptions of central office supervisors. As districts seek to increase achievement for all students, researchers identified the relationship between the central office and the school as the area in which the most significant changes may occur (Guskey; Larson, 2007; Odland, 2007/2008; Protheroe, 2008). This study explored principals' perceptions of the functions of the central office; however, the study did not include perceptions of central office administrators/supervisors. Not only would this research provide additional information in clarifying the role of the central office supervisor, but it would also allow a comparison with principals' perceptions leading to a better understanding of challenges that districts may encounter in leading this change.

Perceptions of teachers. Related studies to identify teachers' perceptions of central office functions would add to the information needed by district leaders. A study involving teachers should take into account the importance of identifying participants who have a general understanding of the central office; therefore, selecting participants serving in formal teacher leadership roles should be considered. This research would assist in further clarifying the functions of the central office as seen by the classroom teacher.

Comparison of Title I and non-Title I schools. This study compared schools that made AYP and schools that did not make AYP; however, it did not include other factors such as the Title I status of the school. Title I status is based on the number of economically disadvantaged children in a school, defined as those eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (North Carolina No Child Left Behind, n.d.). Many of *NCLB's* requirements such as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Highly Qualified teacher and teacher assistant standards, accountability, and sanctions for schools designated for improvement are outlined in Title I. A study to compare the perceptions of principals in Title I and non-Title I schools may provide important findings that would be beneficial to districts in understanding the need for differentiated support among schools.

Comparison of perceptions of novice and experienced principals. Focus group participants suggested a similar study comparing novice and experienced principals. Focus group participants felt that the perceptions of novice and experienced principals may be statistically different due to the learning curve for new principals. The research of Helsing, Howell, Kegan, and Lahey (2008) supported this suggestion by finding that novice principals often do not have the skills to meet the demands. In addition, the research of Viadero (2009) found that only half of beginning principals are still in the positions five years later. These data suggest that the level of support required for novice principals is greater than the support required by experienced principals. A study comparing perceptions of novice and experienced principals would be beneficial to district leaders as they set up structures within the central office to support the unique needs of novice principals.

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Perceptions of principals by level (elementary, middle, high). Research to explore the perceptions of principals by level (elementary, middle, high) was suggested during the focus group interview. Even though participants did not believe that perceptions of the overall thematic domains would change, they did suggest that it was worth investigation and could provide additional insights into the differentiated need of principals and schools.

Perceptions in other districts. Focus group participants strongly recommended similar studies in other districts. Three of the focus group participants had served as principals in other districts. They discussed the differences among districts in areas such as flexibility, staff development, support for the use of data, and instructional support. Even though the focus group participants felt that the district in which the study was conducted provided a representative sample group, they questioned whether recent events within the district, including budget reductions and a recent change in district leadership, had caused some feelings of uncertainty, which impacted responses on the survey. Focus group participants suggested that the percentage of responses in agreement for each of the thematic domains may have yielded higher percentages if the study had been conducted during a more stable timeframe. While the results from this study validated the need for central office support in improving student achievement, similar studies in different districts may allow for further exploration as to the level of importance that should be given to each thematic domain.

Case studies of districts effective in implementing changes in the relationship among schools and the central office. While the domains within this study provide a framework for systemic reform, cases to further explore successful implementation,

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barriers, and changes over time are needed. Research of this nature will provide

educational leaders a clearer understanding of what these functions look like in practice

and the impact on the structure of the organization.

Conclusion

This study used a framework generated from a thorough review of current

literature as well as research on the historical role for central office supervision to

develop a survey instrument regarding leadership roles of the central office

administrator in the improvement of student achievement. Survey items addressed 7

thematic domains that were supported by the review. The survey instrument was used

in a large urban district to obtain principals' perceptions of the need for central

office/district support for efforts to increase achievement.

This research is beneficial to districts as they address the rising requirements of

NCLB. Since the enactment of NCLB in 2001, the results have provided very little

encouragement for educators and the public. However, the emerging research

identifies the position of the central office supervisor as the missing element in assisting

the schools in reaching these lofty goals.

This change will not be the first for the central office supervisor. The central

office administrator/supervisor has realigned with other positions several times in order

to survive the negative image of the position generated throughout the history of

education. As a result the supervisor realigned with the instructional specialist in the

1950s (Alfonso et al., 1975; Glanz, 1991; Karier, 1982), followed by realignment with

administrators in the 1980s (Glatthorn, 1998; Wiles & Bondi1986).

Given the findings of this study, now is the time for supervisors to again realign themselves, this time with the schools in a unified effort to increase achievement for all students. Without the cumulative knowledge of the central office and the schools, increases in achievement will fail to reach the majority of the students, particularly students with the greatest needs. While the risks for the position of the supervisor are extremely high based on the history of education, the stakes for failing to do so are even higher for the students that public education serves.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board
East Carolina University, 600 Moye Boulevard
1L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Bldg. • Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** • Fax **252-744-2284** • www.ecu.edu/irb
Chair and Director of Biomedical IRB: L. Wiley Nifong, MD
Chair and Director of Behavioral and Social Science IRB: Susan L. McCammon, PhD

TO: Terri Rogers Cobb, 4514 Hatcher Lane, Wilson, NC 27896

FROM: UMCIRB *uu*

DATE: March 17, 2010

RE: Expedited Category Research Study

TITLE: "Systemic Change: Functions of the Central Office Supervisor That Support Increased Achievement for All Students"

UMCIRB #10-0150

This research study has undergone review and approval using expedited review on 3.12.10. This research study is eligible for review under an expedited category number 6 & 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this **unfunded** study **no more than minimal risk** requiring a continuing review in **12 months**. Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

The above referenced research study has been given approval for the period of **3.12.10** to **3.11.11**. The approval includes the following items:
- Internal Processing Form (dated 2.22.10)
- Principals Perceptions of Central Office Functions
- Focus Group Questions
- Invitation to Principals to Participate in Study
- Letter of Invitation to participate in a Focus Group
- Principal's Consent Form to Participate in the Focus Group (received 3.1.10)

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

The UMCIRB applies 45 CFR 46, Subparts A-D, to all research reviewed by the UMCIRB regardless of the funding source. 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56 are applied to all research studies under the Food and Drug Administration regulation. The UMCIRB follows applicable International Conference on Harmonisation Good Clinical Practice guidelines.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418
IRB00004973 East Carolina U IRB #4 (Behavioral/SS Summer) IORG0000418
Version 3-5-07

UMCIRB #10-0150
Page 1 of 1

Principal's Consent Form to Participate in the Focus Group

I give my consent to participate in a focus group related to a study entitled, *Systemic Change: Functions of the Central Office that Increase Achievement for all Students.*

I understand that:

- This study will contribute to the general knowledge and understanding of the functions of the central office in improving achievement for all students.

- The focus group discussion will be recorded and transcribed for use as one part of the study.

- I understand that I can limit my participation to questions with which I feel comfortable. I am not required to answer all questions.

- I understand that if I feel in distress by participating, I am free to leave at any time during the focus group discussion.

- I understand that while all responses will be recorded, my identify will remain anonymous within the study.

- I can request a copy of the study upon completion.

- By signing this agreement, I am agreeing to participate in the focus group to the extent that I feel is appropriate.

I understand that I will engage in a discussion related to functions of the central office that I feel are critical for improved achievement for all students within my school and the district.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

UMCIRB
APPROVED
FROM 3·12·16
TO   3·11·11

209

WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

3550 WAKE FOREST ROAD
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27609
PHONE: 919.850.1863
FAX: 919.850.2861

March 19, 2010

Terri Cobb
4514 Hatcher Lance
Wilson, NC 27896

Dear Ms. Cobb:

Your request to conduct research entitled "System Change: Functions of the Central Office that Increase Achievement for All Students" in Wake County Public Schools has been approved. Your project number is 741. Please use this number in any correspondence with our office regarding this project.

Please provide a copy of this approval letter to the principal when soliciting their participation. Although this letter constitutes our office's approval of your study, it does in no way obligate the principal to participate; it is up to them to make that decision. If there are questions about this constraint, please call me at 850-1798.

I look forward to working with you and learning the results of your study. Please remember to send me a summary of your findings once your study is completed.

Sincerely,

Angie Wright
Evaluation and Research
Wake County Public Schools

APPENDIX C: SOURCES OF THEMATIC DOMAINS FOR CENTRAL OFFICE FUNCTIONS

Sources	Systemic Focus	Commitment to Instruction	Use of Data to Drive Decisions	Investment in Professional Development	Leadership Development	Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources	Identification of Intervention Strategies
Bottom, G. & Fry, B (2009)	X	X	X			X	
Brown, C & Spangler, D. (2006)	X	X	X	X	X		
Burch, P. & Spillane, J. (2004)	X	X	X	X			
Chafin, A. (2005)	X	X	X	X			X
Chrispeels, J., Burke, P., Johnson, P., Daly, A. (2008)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chhuon, V., Gilkey, E., Gonzalez, M., & Chrispeels, J. (2006)	X	X	X	X	X		
Copland, M. (2003)	X	X		X	X		
Corcoran, T., Fuhrman, S., Belcher, C. (2001)	X	X	X	X			
Danielson, L, Doolittle, J., & Bradley, R. (2007)		X		X	X		X
Darling-Hammond, L,.Hightower, A, Husbands, J, LaFors, J., Young, V, & Christoper, C. (2005)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Downey, C. (September/October 2001)	X	X		X		X	
Downey, C., Steffy, B., Poston, W., English, F. (2009)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Karhanek (2010)	X	X	X	X	X		X
English, F. (2009)	X	X	X	X		X	
Foley, E. & Sigler, D. (2009)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fullan, M. (2009)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fullan, M. (2010b)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fullan, M (2010c)	X	X	X	X	X		
Fullan, M. & Levin, B. (2009)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Guskey, T. (2007)	X	X	X	X	X		
Hannay, L., Manning, M., Earl, S, & Blair, D. (2006)	X	X	X	X	X		
Harris, A., & Chrispeels, J. (2006)	X		X				
Hightower, A. (2002)	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Reference							
Honig, M. (2004)	X	X	X	X		X	
Honig, M. & Copland, M. (2008)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Knapp, M., Copland, M., & Talbert, J. (2003)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Leverett, L. (2004)	X	X	X	X	X		
MacIver, M. (2004)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mac Iver, M., & Farley-Ripple, E. (2008)	X	X	X	X		X	
Marsh, J., Ikemoto, G., Darilek, H., Suttorp, M., Zimmer, R., & Barney, H. (2005)	X	X	X	X	X		
Massell, D. & Goertz, M. (2002)	X	X	X	X			
McBeath, A. (2006)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
McLaughlin, M. & Talbert, J. (2002)	X	X	X	X	X		
McLaughlin, M., & Talbert, J. (2003)	X	X	X	X	X		
McNeil, B. & Oxholm, T. (2009)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Muirhead, M., Tyler, R., & Hamilton, M. (2001)	X	X	X	X		X	X
Murphy, J. & Hallinger, P. (2001)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Murphy, J., & Meyer, C. (2008)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Orr, T., Berg, B., Shore, R. & Meier, E. (2008)	X	X	X	X	X		
Protheroe, N. (2008)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Resnick, L. & Glennan, T (2002)	X	X	X	X			
Rorrer, A., Skria, L., & Scheurich, J. (2008)	X	X		X	X		
Seven actions that improve school district performance (2006)	X	X	X	X	X		
Shannon, G., & Bylsma, P (2004)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Sharratt, L., & Fullan M. (2009)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Silverman, F. (2004)							
Snipes, J., Doolittle, F., & Herlihy, C. (2002)	X	X	X	X		X	X
Stover, D. (2008)	X	X			X	X	
Supovitz, J. (2006)	X	X	X	X			
Supovitz, J. (2008)	X	X	X	X		X	
Thornton, B., Shepperson, T., & Canavero, S. (2007)	X	X	X	X		X	
Togneri, W., & Anderson, S. (2003a)	X	X	X	X	X		
Togneri, W., & Anderson, S. (2003b)	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Waters, J., & Marzano, R. (2006)	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Principals Perceptions of Central Office Functions

DIRECTIONS: Please take 10-15 minutes to complete this survey by responding to the statements based on your experiences as a principal. Indicate whether each function below should be a central office responsibility in improving student achievement. While some functions may be a shared responsibility with the school and/or community, the purpose is to identify functions in which the central office has partial or complete responsibility. Responses will be compiled for overall results; however, individual responses are completely anonymous.

SECTION I: SYSTEMIC FOCUS
In your opinion, do you think the central office, **through a systemic focus,** helps increase student achievement by:

1. Developing a systemic focus on student achievement through a district vision.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
2. Ensuring that the district vision supports equity by removing barriers to providing all students with an excellent education.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
3. Building ownership and sustaining progress through a credible process to communicate and collaborate with multiple sectors of the community.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
4. Assist stakeholders in making a commitment to a multi-year plan.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
5. Determining a small number of ambitious priorities for the district with measurable targets.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
6. Assisting all members of the organization in establishing relentless consistency while seeking continuous improvement.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
7. Educating stakeholders including the school board in building an improvement agenda.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
8. Promoting collaborative relationship that instill trust and pride in the district.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
9. Developing shared norms for reform practices throughout the district.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
10. Developing processes for holding all staff members accountable to the district vision and goals.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
11. Developing a problem-solving focus in which problems are viewed as issues to be solved.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
12. Ensuring policy and program coherence by removing competing programs and requirements.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
13. Engaging in district-wide, research-based continuous improvement process/cycle.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
14. Promoting service orientation towards schools and community.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
15. Coordinating external assistance providers (i.e. technology, professional development, data collection).	0 Disagree	0 Agree
16. Empowering schools to customize as needed within a district framework.	0 Disagree	0 Agree

SECTION II: COMMITMENT TO INSTRUCTION

In your opinion, do you think the central office, **through commitment to instruction**, helps increase student achievement by:

17. Establishing a clear focus on instruction.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
18. Establishing an infrastructure that supports instruction as the key component in the district.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
19. Ensuring alignment of state and district standards, assessments, and student objectives.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
20. Identifying research based programs, strategies, and instructional practices.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
21. Assisting in the selection and deep alignment of instructional materials to district objectives and assessment as well as state assessments.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
22. Designing pacing guides with a feasible number of objectives to be taught in the time allotted.	0 Disagree	0 Agree

SECTION III: USE OF DATA TO PROMOTE DECISIONS

In your opinion, do you think the central office, **through data driven decisions**, helps increase student achievement by:

23. Establishing multi-measure accountability systems.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
24. Promoting overall transparency of the results related to the core business of the district.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
25. Developing formative assessments aligned with the curriculum and summative assessments.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
26. Assisting in benchmarking between schools within the district and with other districts as a whole.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
27. Constructing mechanisms to provide data at all levels of the system.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
28. Promoting data-based decision making at all levels of the district.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
29. Setting growth targets based on data.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
30. Assessing progress toward district goal and individual school objectives.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
31. Providing assistance to school in the understanding and use of data.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
32. Ensuring available technology support for maintaining and communicating data.	0 Disagree	0 Agree
33. Utilizing program evaluations to document a program's data-based merit.	0 Disagree	0 Agree

SECTION IV: INVESTMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In your opinion, do you think the central office, **through professional development**, helps increase student achievement by:

	Disagree	Agree
34. Ensuring system-wide professional development focused on building the capacity to improve learning and teaching.	0	0
35. Providing high-quality professional development that is on-going, job-embedded, and aligned with identified needs and targeted goals.	0	0
36. Providing professional development for role-alike groups (i.e. counselors, media specialists, principals).	0	0
37. Providing professional development to assist new employees in understanding district expectations.	0	0
38. Establishing formal and informal mentoring programs.	0	0
39. Supporting structures for learning communities throughout the district (i.e. schools, school based specialists, central services staff).	0	0

SECTION V: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In your opinion, do you think the central office, **through leadership development**, helps increase student achievement by:

	Disagree	Agree
40. Encouraging distributed leadership through job-embedded work.	0	0
41. Ensuring strong instructional leadership by advancing skills of district and school leaders.	0	0
42. Providing all leaders with the knowledge to understand the elements of organizational change.		
43. Ensuring that the principal is the instructional leader within the school.	0	0
44. Partnering with institutes of higher education to provide professional development	0	0
45. Offering advancement for the most effective individuals.	0	0

SECTION VI: OPTIMAL USE OF HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In your opinion, do you think the central office, **through optimal use of human and financial resources,** helps increase student achievement by:

	Disagree	Agree
46. Prioritizing resources to align with and drive the district goals.	0	0
47. Ensuring equitable distribution of resources.	0	0
48. Ensuring equitable transparent distribution of resources.	0	0
49. Assisting schools in understanding finances.	0	0
50. Seek Alternative Revenues	0	0

SECTION VII: IDENTIFICATION OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

In your opinion, do you think the central office, **through identification of intervention strategies,** helps increase student achievement by:

	Disagree	Agree
51. Develop and support multi-tiered intervention services/strategies.	0	0
52. Assist in finding a balance between strategies that focus on practice and drill, and programs that are interactive.	0	0
53. Develop alternative programs for students who cannot succeed in the traditional learning environment.	0	0
54. Provide professional development related to intervention strategies.	0	0
55. Use data for decision-making related to intervention strategies.	0	0

Please list any additional functions of the central office that you feel are essential in improving student achievement.

APPENDIX E: INVITATION TO PRINCIPALS TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

March 21, 2010

Dear Principal:

As a doctoral student, I am in the process of collecting data for my dissertation. The purpose of this study is to explore principals' perceptions of central office functions that support increased achievement for all students. In addition, I will investigate whether there is a difference in perceptions of principals' in schools that made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and principals in schools that did not make AYP. Information from this study will allow districts to focus the support of central office supervisors.

As a fellow educator, I understand how valuable your time is. For that reason, I have constructed a survey that can easily be completed in 10-15 minutes. Individual responses will be confidential and surveys will be destroyed following the completion of the study. Surveys have been coded to allow responses to be separated by schools that made AYP and those schools that did not. After the responses have been recorded, codes will be eradicated and, again, all surveys will be destroyed following the completion of the study.

Thank you in advance for participating in this study by completing the survey. Please return the survey in the self-addressed envelope that has been provided. I look forward to sharing the results of the survey once the study is completed. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at trc0602@ecu.edu or call my home at (252) 291-9486.

Sincerely,

Terri R. Cobb
Doctoral Candidate
East Carolina University

UMCIRB # 10-0150
WCPSS Project No. 741

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. (Share results of survey.) Are there any surprises? Do you feel this information is an accurate reflection of principals' perceptions of the district's role in increasing student achievement? Are there any results with which you disagree? Explain your answer.

2. Do you think the responses for this group would be different in another district? Why or why not?

3. From the seven domains within the theoretical framework, which areas do you think are the most essential district functions in improving achievement for all students? Why?

4. From the seven domains within the theoretical framework, which areas do you think are the least essential district functions in improving achievement for all students? Why?

5. Can you identify areas under each thematic domain that you feel should have not been included on the survey? Explain your answer.

6. Can you identify areas that you feel should have been included that were not? Explain your answers.

7. One purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between responses of principals at schools that met AYP and schools that did not meet AYP. Are there other comparisons that you feel should be explored in order to understand the different levels of support that are required by schools in increasing achievement for all students? Would the results be different?

8. How might the results from this study be beneficial to the superintendent and/or district leaders? Explain your answer.

9. The current research warns that increased achievement for all students will not occur without substantial involvement from the district. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

10. Without this support from the district, will these tasks be accomplished? Who will take responsibility?   Without this support what would be the impact on the role of the principal?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to add about how central services can support your school and/or the district in improving achievement for all students?